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Old Thoughts on Old Themes

—by—

Rev. Edward C. Hearn.



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Dedication.

*To those who labor on, of the Class of '88, of Old
St. Joseph's Seminary, Troy, New York.*

IMPRIMATUR

✠ *John L. Spalding,*

Bishop of Peoria.

PREFACE.

The title of this book "Old Thoughts on Old Themes" suggests, somewhat, the nature of the matter the reader may expect to meet herein. The topics treated are some, only, of very many upon which the undersigned has spoken, after the manner of sermons, at different times and in different places during a ministry of twelve years.

Some of these topics are as old as the world; and some are not very new. Little, therefore, is said that has not "oft been said before" and so no claim is laid to originality. If any merit, however, attaches to the selection of ideas and the arrangement of them as they occur in these pages, the writer can say that such are all his own. On the other hand, should anyone take exception to the number of quotations found in some of these "Themes" he may know they are given in the belief that "in a multitude of words there is wisdom." And the writer finds comfort and encouragement in the truthful words of Emerson: "We are as much informed of a writer's genius by what he selects as by what he originates. We read the quotation with his eyes, and find a new and fervent sense." With a certain class, of course, it is hardly to be expected that these "Themes" can find much favor. The novel and the progressive are such supreme and all-absorbent factors of their lives that they

fail to realize, apparently, that despite the acknowledged advances of science, the "boast of heraldry," and the "pomp of power," it yet remains debatable whether the world, on moral lines, is keeping abreast of its ideals. It is a humiliating certainty to all who "run and read" that the efforts of modern civilization are thus far, seemingly, but "barriers to be burned away" before the onward and steady march of evil. That there stalks abroad a widespread disregard for all laws, Divine and human, needs no comment. Virtue is on the wane, vice is becoming popular, and pink-edged, genteel depravity is hardly less common and less odious than dark-visaged, flagrant criminality. Why all this? Not the least because the race is losing sight of the "Old Themes"—topics that ever have been, that are, and forever must be of vital import to every soul that lives.

In point of fact what find we better and more honorable than age in everything? Thus, while we admire the new we venerate and cling to the old. Old wood to burn! Old wine to drink! Old friends to trust! Old authors to read! "I love everything that's old," says Oliver Goldsmith, "old friends, old times, old manners, old books."

In the hope that these "Old Thoughts on Old Themes" may incite those who peruse them to better and nobler living, the writer sends them adrift.

May 1st, 1901.

EDWARD C. HEARN.

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Time.

"Son, observe the time."—Eccles. IV: 23.

"I must work the works of him that sent me, whilst it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work."—St. John IX: 4.

No preacher is listened to but time; which gives us the same train and turn of thought that elder people have tried in vain to put into our heads.—Jonathan Swift.

I.

It is related of the great Emperor Charles the Fifth, of Spain, who once owned so many lands, both in Europe and America, that the sun never set on his dominions, that he had in the royal palace a very valuable chest in which were carefully stored away his numerous treasures.

Among the many rare and radiant jewels stored away in this chest was a most costly and artistically wrought finger ring on which was inscribed in delicate characters the following significant words: "This is the most precious jewel in the world."

Brethren, such a jewel you and I possess. What, you ask me, may this jewel be? It is Time.

There are three considerations, that have a most important bearing on the subject before us, which always fill me with sentiments of wonderment and dread when I duly reflect upon them, and which, doubtless, have not infrequently fallen under your own observation.

These are, first, the awful rapidity of the flight of time; secondly, its absolute irrevocability when gone; and thirdly, the seemingly trifling value that men place upon it.

Have we not all marked the more than flash-like speed of time? Do we not often, as we glance at our time-piece, marvel to find the minute or the hour-hand way ahead on the dial? Now, as the balmy days of summer are gradually deepening into the cooler ones of autumn, do we not often remark: "How short the days are getting! How fast the joyous, gladsome summer is speeding away from us!" Time travels like a ship in the wide ocean that hath no bounding shore to mark its progress. Like the inundation of some mighty stream is its course.

We look for the homes and friends of our childhood, they are gone. The loves and animosities of our youth, where are they? Swept away like the camps that had been pitched in the sandy bed of the river. Yes, the moments of our existence escape us almost before they seemed shaped into being; as the lightning's flash they at once exist and expire. And yet we do not think of this; we hardly seem to notice

it. We are like travelers descending a rapid river, who, deceived by their senses, persuade themselves that the banks are moving from them and that they are stationary. What do the years that we have thus far lived appear to us? Those that lie ahead of us, and God alone knows if, indeed, there be yet years in store for us, may appear long; but, looking back upon them from the shady side of sixty, seventy or even eighty, they seem only like a tale that is told, as the dream of a night, or like a bark that goes down a stream, leaving only a furrow on the waters that soon disappears. The past is gone forever; to the uncertain future we can surely lay no claim; the present alone is at our disposal; nay, so fleet and quick in ending does even the short-lived present appear that scarce have we come into possession of it when it, too, is forever buried with the past. I draw a breath, heave a sigh, utter a word, and that breath, that sigh, that word are so much taken away from my life; that much of my earthly existence is gone forever. You entered this sacred edifice a brief while ago, the moments of my poor discourse are present to you now, very shortly you will depart for your peaceful homes, and lo! the

whole period is yours no more. "My days have been swifter than a post," said holy Job, and the devout king, Ezechias, meditating on the shortness of time, cried aloud: "My life is cut off as by a weaver; while I was yet but beginning, he cut me off." *Isaias xxxviii:12.*

"Oh, the illimitable, silent, never-resting thing called time, rolling, rushing on, swift, silent, like an all-embracing ocean-tide, on which we and all the universe swim like exhalations, like apparitions which are and then are not. This surely is a mystery, a very miracle,—a thing to strike us dumb, for we have no word to speak about it."—*Carlyle.*

The second thought that arrests our attention on the subject of time, and which should deeply and lastingly impress us, is that when once it is gone it can never again be recalled. Not all the gems that the dark, untrodden caves of ocean bear, not all the gilded wealth of the universe could buy it, nor all the briny tears that were ever shed could purchase again the faintest portion of it when once it is gone. It is with time pretty much as it is with innocence. Innocence is a flower that withers when touched, and blooms not again though watered with tears.

Time is a jewel of so priceless a value that once lost it can never be recovered—it is lost forever.

You remember the lines: "Lost, yesterday, somewhere between sunrise and sunset, two golden hours, each set with sixty diamond minutes. No reward is offered, for they are gone forever."—Horace Mann. A torn garment may be mended. A burned edifice can be rebuilt. A routed army gathered together and brought again into a state of discipline. Losses of all kinds, whencesoever they come, can in some way or other be made good. But time once gone, is gone beyond recall. In a certain sense time is as valuable as eternity itself, since by the good or evil employment of even one single moment God and heaven may be gained or lost to us forever. A diamond would appear irredeemably precious if with it we could purchase a kingdom. Every moment of time is such a diamond, since there is not a single one of them in which we may not merit for ourselves a share in the eternal and unheard of joys of heaven. Bear in mind that time is only a loan, for the proper use of which we shall one day be obliged to render a most exacting account to a judge

who receives no bribes, takes no excuses, but who will judge that which is just.

Knowing these things, does it not seem as though we ought to treasure every moment of our existence with more than miser care? And yet, is there any one thing that we apparently reckon of so little account? You will see men loitering for hours around the corners of our streets, gazing listlessly at the passers-by, or lolling about for whole days at a time amid the tobacco-fumed and alcohol-scented atmosphere of a bar room; ask them what they are doing, and their answer will be—"We are only passing the time." You will find women, lost to every appearance of that cleanliness and tidiness that so well and fittingly becomes their sex, giving much of the day, and, perhaps, part of the night, to such a free and unbridled expression of their sentiments and thoughts that one would suppose they were officially constituted to pass criticism on every human being that lies both within and without the circle of their acquaintance. Glance at the homes of these and perhaps you would blush at the disclosure: pictures and ornaments disfigured for the want of a careful hand, furniture that a little attention would beautify, and

floors that have not known the touch of a broom for many a long day. Question these, even, and perhaps they too will have the audacity to fall back upon a lack of time as an apology for appearances. Strange, we all sorely complain of the shortness of time, and yet have much more than we know what to do with. "Our lives are either spent in doing nothing at all, or in doing nothing to the purpose, or in doing nothing that we ought to do. We are always complaining that our days are few, and acting as though there would be no end of them. There is nothing that we can properly call our own but our time; yet everybody fools us out of it who has a mind to do it. If a man borrow a paltry sum of money there must needs be bonds and securities; but he who has my time thinks he owes me nothing for it, though it be a debt that gratitude itself can never repay."—*Seneca*.

There is one standpoint, at least, from which we shall all, eventually, realize to its fullest extent the true worth of time—it is the death-bed. Upwards of eighty thousand souls go forth every day to meet their eternal doom, and I hesitate not to aver that nine out of every ten of even the purest and saintliest lived lives of those same

would give worlds upon worlds could they at that awful moment stay time's course to slower speeding. How often have you not heard men, when stretched on a bed of sickness, palsied in limb and physical wrecks of their own folly and dissipation, give vent to their regrets for a mis-spent life in these or similar expressions: "Oh, if I could only live my life over again how good a man I would be! How much would I not do to repair the evils of the days and the hours that are now gone from me forever! If I am only spared to go forth again to my daily duties how different a course will I pursue!"

Think you that the evening of your life will surround you with any kindred regrets? With what kind of a cargo are you freighting the hours and the days that are fast hurrying you on, ever on, way out across the sea of time towards the limitless shore of eternity? Oh, may we all while we are aboard the ship of time, which never anchors, rather do those things that may profit us at our landing than practice such as may cause our commitment when we come ashore!

"Time, the cradle of hope, but the grave of ambition, is the stern corrector of fools, but the

salutary counsellor of the wise, bringing all they dread to the one, and all they desire to the other. It warns us with a voice that even the sagest discredit too long, and the silliest believe too late. Wisdom walks before it, opportunity with it, and repentance behind it; he that has made it his friend will have little to fear from his enemies; but he that has made it his enemy will have little to hope from his friends."—*Colton*.

I might say much more to you on this all-important subject, and tell you how and when we lose our time, and what we should do for a proper disposition of the same. This, however, we will reserve, God willing, for a future occasion.

For the present I shall leave you to the reflections which the subject thus far developed may have suggested, and I shall ask you, in conclusion, to carry with you to your homes to-night the truthful sentiments that underlie the following beautiful lines of the accomplished convert authoress, Adelaide A. Procter:

"One by one the sands are flowing,
One by one the moments fall;
Some are coming, some are going;
Do not strive to grasp them all.

One by one thy duties wait thee,
Let thy whole strength go to each.
Let no future dreams elate thee,
Learn thou first what these can teach.

* * * * *

Hours are golden links, God's token,
Reaching heaven; but one by one
Take them, lest the chain be broken
Ere the pilgrimage be done."

Time.

"For behold short years pass away, and I am walking in a path by which I shall not return."—Job XVI: 23.

"Why stand you here all the day idle?"—St. Matt. XX: 6.

"Who, looking backward from his manhood's prime, Sees not the spectre of his misspent time?"

—Whittier.

II.

At the beginning of a new year it is not only wise and well, but it is even necessary, for every one that has the welfare of his own soul at heart to look carefully over the year that has passed, and by the experiences, bitter or sweet, that it has left behind, learn to use to better advantage the time that is yet at his disposal.

It may seem strange, but it is true, that as we grow older the years seem like mere bubbles on the strand, though they contain the same number of days and hours as when we were young. We compare every year with the sum total of those we have already lived, so that at twenty, it is but the twentieth part of our existence; but at fifty it is the fiftieth, and, seemingly, ever so much shorter.

"The more we live more brief appear
Our life's succeeding stages;
A day to childhood seems a year,
And years like passing ages.

* * * * *

Heaven gives our years of fading strength
Indemnifying fleetness;
And those of youth a seeming length,
Proportioned to their sweetness."

—*Thomas Campbell.*

Few, indeed, fully realize the value of time, or appreciate the blessings they enjoy, until they are gone. There are thousands upon thousands of old men and women in the world to-day who would give all they own could they be given back the opportunity of changing the by-gone deeds which they once committed, when they were young. And there are thousands and thousands of young men and young women, too, who are victims of the same illusions. But regrets never yet split open a coffin lid, and when the past is once gone, it is gone forever and forever and forever.

Now, we all know what our past has been, but we none of us know what our future is to be. But of this we may be certain: if we only do what God wants us to do we shall be something grand, something noble, and something with an immortal hereafter of joy, benediction, and praise. If then there is anything that will ensure

this for us, it is undoubtedly the good and right employment of our time.

It is easier, far, to discourse prettily about the shortness and fleetness of time than to give specific rules how to employ it as it flies; and it is even easier still to do this than to confer the disposition and create the determination to employ it to the best possible advantage. A miser will frequently become wealthy, not because he has a great income, but because he saves with the utmost care and spends with the greatest caution. This is a precept taught us in the very morning of life, but which is, generally, not learned till late in the evening.

It is a prodigious thing to consider that of all the talents entrusted to our keeping, time, upon several accounts, is the most precious; yet there is hardly any of which the generality of men are more profuse and regardless; nay, it is obvious that even those persons who are frugal and thrifty in everything else are yet extremely prodigal of their best revenue, time. Remember that at the very closest calculation we have but a short period in which to learn all and do all that we accomplish in life. Those who spend years in hard and toilsome study, and acquire a repu-

tation for learning, must in the end confess that the little they do know, compared with the much they could know and might know, is nothing. And, doubtless, the experience of many another will be our experience also, namely, that just as we are beginning to learn how to live we shall be called upon to die.

Melancholy in the extreme is it to reflect that, when we have deducted all the time that is lost in sleep; all that is inevitably appropriated to the demands of nature, or irresistibly engrossed by the tyranny of custom; all that passes in regulating the superficial decorations of life, or employed in the reciprocations of civility; all that is torn from us by the ravages of foul disease, or stolen imperceptibly away by lassitude and languor; when, I say, we deduct all this, how very, very small will be the portion of our existence of which we can truly call ourselves masters, or which we can entirely spend at our own choice and pleasure.

The day which is best employed is not the one which has been the most profitable for our temporal affairs, or which has afforded us the greatest amount of frolic and fun, but that which has added most to our merits and with which

God has been well pleased. To so regulate our time that God and our salvation will be our constant object, and to be intimately persuaded that all the time which is not employed for Him is lost—forever lost—is to act wisely and well. How great is the misery and distress of a traveler who, when the night has come, perceives that he has missed the way and that no time remains for him to correct the mistake. Such, at death, will be the anguish of the Christian who has lived many years in the world and who has not spent them for God.

But let us try to be a little more practical. We lose time, mainly, in three ways: First, by doing nothing at all; secondly, by doing evil; and thirdly, by omitting the good we ought to do, or by doing it with improper motives and in the wrong way.

It is a law of God that in the sweat of his brow man shall eat his bread. "Cursed," said the Creator to our first parent, Adam, "is the earth in thy work: with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herbs of earth. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the

earth, out of which thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and into dust shalt thou return."—Gen. iii:17-19. Why those crowds rushing forth from their homes daily, at the sound of the factory bell or the foundry whistle, if not in just fulfillment of the decree issued against the sons of men by the transgression of our primeval parent? "The sun has risen," saith the psalmist, "therefore doth man go forth to his labor till the evening cometh."—Ps. cii:23. And holy Job declares that "as the bird is born to fly, so too is man born to labor."—v:7.

"Go to the ant, thou sluggard," says the wise man; "consider her ways and learn wisdom."—Prov. vi:6. These and innumerable other passages of Holy Writ abundantly testify that the lot of man upon earth is a lot of toil and labor. Now, the idler both lives and acts in direct opposition to this world-wide law. Aversion for labor either supposes that we are not able to conceive anything grand, or that we lack the energy to strive for its realization. The idle man is an object of universal contempt. He is looked upon as a man without a future—a cipher in the world. He is, as the poet says:

"A clock that wants both hands,
As useless if it goes as if it stands."—*Cowper*.

Degrading as this vice is in itself, it is equally so to him who gives himself up to it. "Idleness hath taught much evil" (Eccles. xxxiii:29), says the Scripture; and, according to the adage, "it is the mother of mischief;" but a wise occupation is the shield of the heart.

It costs the devil but very little effort to draw into the most shameful excesses the man whose heart is enervated by indolence, and whose soul is open to all evil impressions. The brook is pure as long as it runs rapidly over the brow of the hill; when it has reached the plains and remains stagnant its limpid water becomes livid and miry. What will you see if you disturb the surface? Reptiles whose number is legion. Such is the heart of the man who slumbers in indolence.

And here it may not be amiss to make a remark on what is called procrastination, that is, a disposition to delay, to put off doing till another time what we ought to do at the present. If you determine to rise at such an hour, be on the floor at the moment. If you resolve to do so much before your breakfast, be sure to do it. It is

impossible to have the mind free and unembarrassed if you suffer your daily duties to be always driving you. The woman who defers her household affairs until the very last moment in which she can put them in order is not her own mistress. A man may do a full day's work in the afternoon; but if he puts it off till that time he will be very unhappy all the morning, will over-exert himself in the afternoon, and, consequently, will be ill in the evening. He who does anything in haste, no matter what his powers of mind may be, cannot do it well. If you have fifty miles to ride to-morrow, you may possibly be able to accomplish the entire journey after dinner; but it would certainly be very unwise to undertake it, and cruel both to yourself and horse. There should be no loitering in the morning because you can retrieve the loss in the evening. Punctuality in attending to one's affairs, let me tell you, is of the very highest importance. It is like packing things in a box; a skillful packer will get in half as much more as an unskillful one, will he not?

One great advantage of punctuality is the calmness of mind which it produces. Disorderly persons, as you must have noticed, are always in

a hurry. They have no time to speak with you, for they are always going somewhere else; and when they arrive there they find it is too late for their business, or they must hasten away again before they can finish it. That was a wise maxim of the old Romans, "*Age quod agis.*" Do what you are doing. Punctuality, moreover, gives weight to character. Such a man has made an appointment with me, then I know he will keep it; and his promptness generates punctuality in me; for, like other virtues, it propagates itself. Appointments, indeed, become debts. I owe you punctuality if I have made an appointment with you, and I have no right to throw away your time, if I do my own.

In fine, the one who succeeds is the one who is prompt. The procrastinator never accomplishes anything of moment. He is always going to do this, or that, and yet he never does it except by accident. Then he wonders at his ill-success, and why other people get along better than he does. If he would sit down and calmly reason out the matter, he would soon discover the cause of his failure in life. If you ask him to do anything right off, he says: "What's the hurry? There is time enough." So, while he is

planning to do something others get in ahead of him. In prospective he is going to be rich, or he is going to be famous. Yet the years move on and he is neither. It may be true, as the poet Burns says, that "the best laid plans of men oft come to naught," but those of the dilatory person are never realized, because his dreams never mature into action. Duty, then, always before pleasure. Strive at all times and in all things to be punctual. Remember that "delays are dangerous." Bear in mind the old maxim, "By the streets of by and by, one arrives at the house of Never." "Procrastination is the thief of time." Who has not heard of David and Solomon? David the man after God's own heart, and Solomon the wisest of men. They were both virtuous; they were saints, even, as long as they kept themselves occupied. What drew them into sin? Idleness. Let us learn from their example what may befall us if we expose ourselves to the same dangers.

We are not more holy than David, nor wiser than Solomon; and how can anyone, and especially the young, with lively imagination and ardent temperament, in the midst of a corrupt world, brave with impunity the enemy that con-

quered them? The folly of those who allow the golden days of youth to pass in idle pleasure, who squander the precious hours which should be devoted to acquiring a store of useful knowledge, passes comprehension and cannot be too severely condemned. They tell us that Gladstone, the late eminent English statesman, never lost a moment of time; but, even in the short intervals between official callers, he was always glancing over some new book; and Cardinal Wiseman's beautiful story of "Fabiola" is the production of stray moments snatched from a busy life. "Be never wholly unoccupied, but always either reading, writing, praying or meditating," is the golden advice of the devout Thomas à Kempis; and St. Jerome counsels us to "work as if we were always to live, and to live as if we were to die at any moment."

We lose time, secondly, in doing evil, as those do who spend their time in reading questionable novels, or other books, in which religion or morals are but little respected; in backbiting or criticising our neighbor and speaking ill of him; in frequenting dangerous society or going to certain soirees or night gatherings where seduction enters into the soul through all the senses;

in meditating projects of revenge, hatred or injustice, and in a thousand other ways forbidden by the laws of God and His Church.

There is an old Spanish proverb which runs this way: "To return good for good is human; to return good for evil is divine; but to return evil for good is satanic."

Milton, in his sublime epic poem "Paradise Lost," puts into the mouth of one of the archfiends of hell these strong, strange words:

"To be weak is to be miserable,
Doing or suffering; but of this be sure,
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to His high will,
Whom we resist."—Bk. I.

If, then, to spend our time in doing nothing at all is sinful and wrong, how satanlike must it not be to spend one's time in doing evil and perverting others.

You remember that little incident in the life of our blessed Lord, when he drew nigh to the barren fig tree (Matt. xxii); seeing it destitute of fruit, although it was not then the season of fruit, He poured out His malediction upon it, saying, "May no fruit grow on thee henceforth

forever;" and immediately it withered away. He seeks for fruit on the branches of this tree and He finds nothing but leaves—useless ornaments, which do not save it from that terrible anathema. Men may be satisfied with the exterior works of virtue, but God, who searches the heart, who hungers after our love, sees nothing but fruitless leaves, with which He will not be satisfied. *Folia tantum*—only leaves.

Now, if the Savior of the world cursed the barren fig tree because it bore no fruit, how much more likely is the evil tree, which produces bad and unwholesome fruit, to meet with the same just punishment.

The Sacred Text informs us that when the prophet Elias fled from the wicked Queen Jezebel his journeyings brought him, finally, to the holy mountain of God, called Horeb. While resting in a cave of the mountain God spoke to him and said: "Elias, what are you doing here?" It would be well if we also, sometimes at least, would put the same question to ourselves. It would keep us away altogether from many places, and would hasten our leaving many more.

What a happy change would be effected in the lives of many of that numerous and foolish class

of humanity that spend hour after hour lolling and loafing around the saloon, inhaling its foul atmosphere, wending their unsteady way home in the small hours of the morning, and perhaps of Sunday morning, too, neglecting their families, ruining soul and body, if they, not sometimes only, but often, would ask themselves the question: "What am I doing here?" All of you when you find yourselves the center, or the side line figure in a group, lending a willing ear to the silly gossip for which the small town is proverbial, would do well to recall the old adage, "the partaker is as bad as the thief," and to ask yourselves the question: "What am I doing here?" Say to yourselves: "this may not be true, or it may be exaggerated. People sometimes tell falsehoods. They often make mistakes, and they frequently hear wrong." Take all these things into consideration before you believe.

So many people in this age, and especially the young, have no aim in life; they simply drift on—go with the current. We have all, it is true, at our birth been put out to sea to make life's voyage. We have left one shore and some day we will land on another. Where? That depends on

the direction we are taking, and by what mark we are steering our ship. Purpose and power determine destination, and the influences we utilize in our progress predict our character and our eternity. Yet, instead of being masters of influence and of the world, so many become a prey to every passing change, and allow themselves to be molded by every contact. Going with the current of thought, being influenced by the moral atmosphere of our associates, swayed by the sentiments of society, and living under the tyranny of the present and the transient, will surely shipwreck the soul on a desolate coast.

Time, remember, is life. God has given us our life, and preserves it to us in order that we may employ it in His service. When we sin we turn the gifts of God against Himself, and employ in outraging Him what we should have employed in serving Him. Alas! how many blacken the days of their life in this detestible ingratitude. Each moment of our existence, as it passes away, enters into the vast bosom of eternity and ceases to belong to time; but before it enters therein it presents itself to the great Master of all, and acts as a witness, either for or against us, according to the good or evil use we have made of it.

Those, then, who in their best years yield to sin and devote all their time and energy to worldly things, who seek to console themselves by saying that they will serve God hereafter when they are old, will find that the hereafter which was to be devoted to acquiring means sufficient for their honorable maintenance in old age, to laying up a store of useful knowledge, or to perfecting themselves in piety and virtue in preparation for a happy death, will never be thus profitably employed. As a man soweth, so also shall he reap, both in quantity and in kind. All men have their seed time and their harvest both in time and for eternity. Another seed time and another harvest may be granted to us; but it is another. That which is lost, is lost forever.

We lose time, in the third place, by omitting the good we ought to do, or by doing it with improper motives, and in the wrong way. The Roman Emperor Titus having once allowed a day to pass without performing some good office, expressed his regret in the following terms: "My friends, I have lost a day."

"Count that day lost whose low, descending sun
Views from thy hand no worthy action done."

—*Anon.*

Hence we lose our time not only when we violate the commandments of God and of His Church, but also by allowing opportunities for doing good to go by unheeded. And, oh! how many a kind act is left undone, how many a gentle, encouraging word unspoken, how many noble deeds of charity unexercised, prayers neglected, Masses unheard, sacraments unfrequented, that time affords ample opportunity for doing were we only disposed to take it.

An evening is passed in chatting and smoking, singing, dancing, and playing cards; it seems a small space of time, but when life closes, and we leave time to go into eternity, how many of these fragments lie scattered and murdered by the wayside.

Men and women neglect to pray, to frequent the sacraments, to assist at holy Mass, to discharge the duties of their state of life; and, they satisfy conscience that they have not time to fulfill them all. But the wasted hours cry out against them. They should have been seized and stamped with what would have met the approbation of conscience and of God as they winged their way to His throne. Surely when death's dark hour arrives, and we are summoned to give

a most exacting account of the thoughts, desires, words and actions of a lifetime, it is not the days and the nights that we have wasted in pleasures, but the times and the moments that we have devoted to God and to the care of our immortal souls, that will afford us consolation and peace.

Alas! how many there have been who have, during their entire lives, squandered this precious gift of time, and who then, when they came to lie on the bed of death, have reproached themselves with a keenness of rebuke which language was too poor to convey. Queen Elizabeth of England, on her dying bed, cried aloud: "Millions of money for one inch of time!" But vain was the offer; the piercing cry came too late!

Another, as he lay dying, said: "Oh, call back time again; if you can call back time again then there may be hope for me!"

"O Time! that ever with resistless wing
Cuts off our joys and shortens all our pain!
Thou great destroyer that dost always bring
Relief to man—all bow beneath thy reign.
Nations before thee fall, and the grim king
Of death and terror follows in thy train."—*Anon.*

One of the greatest torments endured by the reprobate is his now unavailable regret in not

having profited by the time that was granted him here below for doing good and saving his immortal soul. There is not a single one of those lost and unhappy beings that will not be eternally tortured by the galling reflection that he might to-day be a saint before the great white throne in heaven had he only led the life of the righteous. "Men," as a writer has plainly but truthfully put it, "may live fools, but fools they cannot die" (*Young*). And, believe me or not as you will, there are some living within the circuit of this little parish who ought to be good and edifying Catholics, and who, unless they turn from the error of their way, are laying up for themselves regrets as bitter as any that are to-day the lot of the reprobate. They see the symbol of salvation pointing heavenward from this beautiful church on the plain; they hear the voice of the Almighty calling them to assemble with His faithful ones around His holy altar; but, strange to say, Sundays come and Sundays go, week succeeds week, and year follows year, yet finding them still the same; still draining pleasure's sinful bowl; still going on in their indifference and neglect, despising their Creator, disregarding the teachings of their Church, and perhaps even

scoffing at religion and its ministers. Some day, however, the measure of their iniquities will be filled; God's mercies will be exhausted, and the threat that awaits the impenitent sinner will be fulfilled in their regard: "You shall seek me and you shall not find me, you shall die in your sins." Yes, death will disclose to them the error of their wasted lives, and eternity will revenge the follies of time.

One more reflection before I finish. I have said that we lose time in doing evil. More than this: whatever a man does, if he be not in a state of grace, and if he fail to do it out of love for God, it has no value for eternity. A life poisoned with sin may succeed in doing some things which the world calls "good," but such good deeds will not be credited in the heavenly book of records and reckonings. You may lead a life of more than angelic purity from the cradle till your locks are silver, and fill up this life with a long list of hard and bitter penances, and then have the misfortune to stain your soul with one, and but one, single mortal sin, when lo! the whole bulk of your accumulated merits will weigh nothing in the scales of divine justice. A man, for example, knowingly, deliberately and without a reasonable

preventing cause absents himself from Mass on Sunday, gets beastly intoxicated, or commits a grave sin of injustice; all the merits he may have previously acquired are lost, and he becomes, while in that miserable state, incapable of doing anything worthy of life eternal. This is rather a disheartening consideration, but one, nevertheless, in perfect consonance with the teachings of Catholic theology.

That the subject upon which I have spoken to you to-day may enable you to spend this new year well, or, at all events, that portion of it which the Almighty may be pleased to grant you, I would counsel you to bear in mind, and weave into your daily lives the following considerations: first, always to regulate your time. We find time for everything when we live according to rule and order. Those who do not live thus, go out of the way, follow the vagueness of their thoughts, obey the dictates of caprice and inconstancy, uncertain as to what they will or will not do, and consequently, when their life work is ended it discloses many, many hours and days for the employment of which they can find no justification. But in a well regulated life there is no vacuum; everything has been foreseen;

everything follows in order, and every action is more meritorious because performed through obedience, and because of the victories which we gain over ourselves. "Dost thou love life?" says Benjamin Franklin; "then waste not time, for time is the stuff that life is made of."

Secondly, we should endeavor to have at all times and in everything a pure and perfect intention. God sees the preparation of the heart. An ardent desire to please Him, and an ever watchful and continued attention to do and suffer through this motive, is so excellent a means to redeem time that it will enable us, in some measure at least, to compensate for the days and the years that are gone.

Finally, to remember the days of old, which we have lost; the eternal years upon which we shall soon enter; to meditate often upon the rapidity with which time escapes us, and of the slight portion, after all, that we can really call our own. The past has gone forever; to the uncertain future we can surely lay no claim; the present, alone, is at our disposal. Nay, so short-lived and fleet in ending does even this appear that, according to St. Augustine, it has more of nonen-

tity than being, for its nature is to pass and to cease to be.

"Oh never, then, chide the wing of time,
Or say 'tis tardy in its flight;
You'll find the days speed quick enough
If you but husband them aright.

"Time is, indeed, a precious boon,
But with the boon a task is given;
The heart must learn its duty well
To man on earth and God in Heaven."

—Miss Cook.

And as a last and comforting word I would remind you of what, surely, you all know yourselves, that

"Though old time will some day end life's story,
No time, if we end well, will end our glory."

Eternity.

"I thought upon the days of old, and I had in my mind the eternal years."—Ps. LXXVI : 6.

"While we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen. For the things that are seen are temporal; but the things that are not seen are eternal."—II Cor. IV : 18.

"Tell me, Louisa, how many years could I, who am now so old, expect to live?" "You might," replied Louisa, "live for twenty years more." "O foolish woman, do you want me, for twenty years of life on this earth, to forfeit an eternity of happiness, and condemn myself to an eternity of torments?" (Reply of Sir Thomas More, Lord High Chancellor of England under Henry the Eighth, to his wife.)

III.

The subject that underlies this text is one about which, I must confess, my knowledge is very, very limited; and so meagre and vague is the information that learning and talent have thrown upon it, that feeble, at best, must be my attempt to enlighten you.

O eternity, eternity! how little we know of a state to which we are destined, and how does the obscurity that hangs over that undiscovered country increase the anxiety we feel as we are journeying toward it! "Our imagination so magnifies this present existence, by the power of continual reflection on it, and so attenuates eternity, by not thinking of it at all, that we reduce an eternity to nothingness, and expand a mere nothing to eternity; and this habit is so inveterately rooted in us that all the force of reason cannot induce us to lay it aside."—*Pascal*.

"Most persons in thinking of time relatively to eternity, represent to themselves a long, long ago, blind past, and then an interminable but

partially appreciable future, and time lying as a sort of sliced-out period between the two, which slice is attached to the eternity behind and the eternity before, and about which we have the comfort and satisfaction of being able to write history and chronicle events. We treat it as we would a mountain of gold, which we coin into money, and we conveniently cut it up into ages, years, months, days and hours. It is our nature to do so, and we cannot do otherwise. It is the condition of our being. But, as it will not be always thus, there are few things we are more constantly exhorted to do than to raise our imagination, or rather our faith, as much as possible out of these conventional and arbitrary trammels, and dispose ourselves for that better and fuller life to come which is our ultimate end, and where there are no years and no days."*

Of three things, it is safe to say, we have absolute certitude, namely, that we now exist; that we were not always; and that we shall never cease to be.

A hundred years ago and not one of us here present to-day had any existence at all. If you

* Adapted from "The Eternal Years." By Hon. Mrs. A. Montgomery.

searched the tops of the highest mountains or scoured the depths of the deepest sea, you could not find us. We were nothing and nowhere. God in His infinite goodness and mercy drew us forth from that abyss of nothingness in which we were immersed and gave us being and life. And a hundred years to come?

"Who'll press for gold the crowded street

A hundred years to come?

Who'll tread this church with willing feet

A hundred years to come?

The rich, the poor, on land and sea,

Where will the mighty millions be

A hundred years to come?

We all within our graves shall be

A hundred years to come.

No living soul for us will weep

A hundred years to come.

And other men our lands will till,

And other men our streets will fill,

A hundred years to come."—*Anon.*

But a hundred, or a thousand, or ten thousand times a hundred times a thousand years, and think you we shall then cease to be? Ah no! For, whereas it is certain that we once were nothing, and that we now exist and live, certain too it is that we shall never again be nothing.

And where shall we then be? We shall be in eternity.

"Man shall go into the house of his eternity." Before the countless worlds that stud the canopy of heaven, or even the very dust from which we borrowed our existence was created, God the Almighty existed in the unparalleled brightness of His inconceivable light; and when years will have swelled into ages, when ages will have passed into myriads and myriads of ages, when the mind of man will have exhausted itself in endeavoring to measure the length of eternity by its own ideas of time, yea, when time itself shall have ceased, and worlds will have passed away, He will still exist in the undiminished splendor of His inconceivable duration, for "Thou, O Lord, art the selfsame and thy years shall not change." "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was made I am." St. Jno. viii:48. And not only so, but we believe, on the authority of truth divine, transmitted to us through the infallible teaching of Holy Church, that after this present life, where everything is evanescent and fleeting, we too shall enter eternity, where nothing passes away. "All great natures delight in stability; all great men find eter-

nity affirmed in the very promise of their faculties."—*Emerson*.

"There is," says Cicero, "I know not how, in the minds of men a certain presage, as it were of a future existence, and this takes the deepest root, and is most discoverable, in the greatest geniuses and most exalted souls." Nature, too, seems silently to repeat that man is immortal. At evening, when the heavens appear to recline so softly on the earth, does not imagination picture beyond the horizon an asylum of hope, a native land of undying love?

Reason demonstrates the immortality of the soul; the most evident revelation teaches us the resurrection of the body and the eternity of the great hereafter. "Thou, O Lord, in the beginning, didst lay the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall all grow old as a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou change them and they shall be changed; but Thou, O God, and we, by a decree of Thy sovereign will, shall remain, and our years shall not fail."—Ps. ci:26-29. Thou hast ordained that eternity should be attached to our being, as it is to Thine! Thou and we shall subsist forever!

Where are all those who once made the world resound with the story of their greatness? Where are the mighty ones of ages long gone by, the patriarchs and prophets of the olden time, the heroes and sages of Greece and Rome? They are in eternity. Where are all the countless beings that peopled the world in the days before the flood; the innumerable millions that lived and died in the darkness of error and infidelity; the inconceivable hosts that have perished on all the battle-fields, and in all the appalling disasters and heartrending catastrophies recorded on the pages of history? They are in eternity. Where are the associates of childhood, the friends of our riper years, the dear familiar forms of parents, brothers and sisters that remorseless death has taken from us? They are in eternity.

"O eternity, eternity, thou pleasing, dreadful thought!"—*Addison*.

Who of that innumerable caravan that has crossed to thy echoless shores has ever yet returned to tell us what thou art? Language is powerless to express what the mind does not comprehend. For eternity, being one of the perfections of God, must be as incomprehensible as God Himself.

"What is eternity?" was a question once asked at an educational institution in Paris; and the beautiful and striking answer given by one of the pupils was this: "The lifetime of the Almighty." "Ego sum qui sum"—"I am who am," was the definition given of Himself by the Creator to Moses of old. "Who shall measure thy days, O Holy One of Israel, for from eternity to eternity Thou art God."

With regard to us eternity is duration without end. An unvarying condition, which nothing can measure and nothing alter. "It is," says Saint Augustine, "a circle, the centre of which is ever, and whose circumference is never." Our age, proud of its discoveries, inventions and appliances, has accomplished marvels by the power of calculation. It has measured the depths of the sea and the heights of the mountains. It has brought within its compass the dimensions and movements not alone of the planet which we inhabit, but likewise of the countless worlds that float in space; their position with regard to us, and their relative distances from one another.

But who has ever yet been subtle enough to measure the length of eternity? What power of calculation can come near a boundary where no

boundary exists? What sounding line can fathom a limitless abyss? What glance can look beyond a height whose end no eye can reach? What comparison, then, shall I employ adequate enough to convey to you even a faint idea of those unending days that await us after death? Shall I bid you behold the foamy, fathomless ocean, and measure the briny drops that compose its immensity, or number the wrinkled sands that pave its extended shores? Easier far would the computation be, than that of the revolution of the eternal years. Shall I call to my assistance the science of numbers, and bid the mathematician have recourse to his highest powers of calculation? Even so; let him be exclusively employed in the operation and when he shall have completed a cycle of digits sufficient to gird the countless worlds that illumine the cerulean fields of space, he will find that he has only bartered away irrevocable time in a useless and hopeless task. There is in the northern hemisphere a brilliant star called Arcturus. Of the myriads and myriads of worlds in that section of the heavens it is said to be our nearest neighbor. And how near think you may that be? Only a little more than eleven million times as far away

as the sun. That gorgeous sun, which shines above us and around us, and which is so necessary for life and growth, is ninety millions of miles distant from the earth. Consequently, if the sun is ninety millions of miles away from the earth, and Arcturus is eleven million times as far away again from our beautiful orb of day, if you multiply ninety millions by eleven millions, you will have an idea of the immense and inconceivable distance we are from that wonderful star. Suppose now you have a ladder of gold, the foot of which rests on the earth, and the top on that far off planet, Arcturus, and that you climb one round every year; how long, tell me, do you think it would take you before you would be able to accomplish your task, and reach the top of that golden ladder? The mind is lost in those billions and trillions of ages; and yet eternity is all this and infinitely more. Add, subtract, multiply or divide it by any conceivable mathematical quantity, and you neither augment nor diminish its duration.

Though language be rich "in thoughts that breathe and words that burn," ever and never, always and forever, alone can express the duration of an endless, unchangeable and irreparable

hereafter. How long shall the ravishing joys of paradise inundate the souls of the blest? How long shall the dismal wails of the lost continue to resound through the gloomy vaults of hell? Forever.

When will eternity become a little less delightful to the friends of God, a little less hopeless to His enemies? Never. O Ever, O Never, O Eternity! Would that we could understand you as those do whom death has separated from us! Vicissitude is the lot of our present condition. Unchangeableness awaits us in the great hereafter. Here day follows night, and night gives place to day, seasons pass and repass, and variety is the spice of life; but in the long-continued round of the eternal years, all will be fixed and immutable. "In whatsoever place the tree shall fall, there shall it be."—Eccles. xi:3. When the tree is cut down it falls, does it not, to the side to which it is inclined? In what direction does the tree lean? Is it much inclined? Has it been so long? It matters little. In what place soever it shall fall, there it shall be. After the lingering lapse of as many millions of ages as there are drops of water in the deep and dark blue sea, leaves on the beautiful trees, or grains of sand

on the great sea-shore, even then there shall it still be.

So, then, there is an eternity, and, though I feel and believe that I have made but a feeble attempt to enlighten you on this profound mystery of faith, still, that the little I have said may carry conviction to your minds and dispose your hearts for nobler deeds, let us go back, before we finish, to a thought or two put forth in the beginning of my sermon.

A hundred years ago and not one of us here present to-day had any existence at all. We were nothing and nowhere. The Omnipotent drew us forth from this abyss of nothingness in which we were immersed, and gave us being and life. Certain as we are that we once were not, and that we now exist, certain, no less it is, that we shall never cease to be. God, we know, is ever the same. He never alters His decrees, nor changes the nature of His creations; and, though a "breath might break us, as a breath hath made us," still we are born for eternity, and for all eternity we shall live. What follows? Three most important and never to be forgotten considerations:

First, That eternity depends on our life.

Secondly, On a very short life, and

Thirdly, Perhaps on one moment of our life.*

Of the sovereign Judge of the living and the dead it is written: "He will render to every one according to his works."—Matt. xvi:28. And of man, who shall be judged, it is said: "What things a man shall sow those also shall he reap."—Gal. vi:8. Cast thy bread upon the running waters, and in time it shall return to you again. "Our actions," says St. Bernard, "are so many seeds for eternity. We cast them down into the earth, they disappear, but we shall find them again at death, when they shall be inseparably united to us."

The thought which crosses my mind, the word which escapes my lips, the action which lasts but a moment, are all flowing on into the vast bosom of eternity; they are carefully stored away in the memory of the Almighty, and have become as permanent and as immutable as eternity itself. "Where do our thoughts go?" asked the child; and the mother replied, "Into the memory of God."

* These considerations, and some of the thoughts that occur in the development of them, are adapted from "Chaignon's Sacerdotal Meditations."

You remain away from Mass on Sunday without a reasonable preventing cause. You curse, blaspheme, or injure your neighbor in his person, property, or reputation, and these, unless expiated by Christian^e penance, shall for eternity be attached to your soul, to torture it, as the vulture adheres to the prey which it devours. We are, therefore, the arbiters of our own unending hereafter; and, if we judge of the future by the past, when we call to mind our failings, imprudences and falls, have we not reason to fear and tremble?

Eternity depends on a very short life. Days which can be counted, and years which can be measured are nothing when compared with endless duration. "Behold Thou hast made my days measurable; and my substance is as nothing before thee."—Ps. xxxvii:6. What after all is our life? "A vapor, which appeareth but a little while and afterwards shall vanish away."—St. Jas. iv:15. A shade, whose footsteps are like those of a wind across the sea, which the calm of morn erases, and of which nothing remains save the traces on the wrinkled sand that paves it (Shelley); a tale as brief, and yet as full of wondrous change as any told of old to minstrel harp at midnight's silent hour.

"Men flourish, like the morning flower
In beauty's pride arrayed;
But, long ere night, cut down, it lies
All withered and decayed."—*Robert Burns.*

Yes, fleet and quick in ending, is the longest life. And, who that has ever lived but must, perforce, at its close, confess with the aged patriarch, Jacob: "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage;" with Ezechias, King of Juda: "My generation is at an end; and it is rolled away from me as a shepherd's tent"—Is. xxxviii:12; or with holy Job, "It has passed away like ships carrying fruit."—ix:26. Do not our days, in very truth, flow by like the waters of a rapid river, whose course nothing can stop? And like those waters do we not fall into the earth and return no more? Kings xiv:14.

"When we stand on the railroad, and look down the track for about a mile, it seems to us that the rails come nearer and nearer, till at last they meet. This appears so on account of the distance. But where they seem to touch they are just as far apart as where we are standing. So, also, looking back from eternity to the period of our mortal life, the day of our birth and the day

of our death will seem to coincide, and our life here below will appear as nothing."*

Finally, our eternity depends, perhaps, on one moment of our life. Grace has its times. Light shines and disappears. God comes near, and retires. He is master of His gifts and grants them on the conditions He wills. Perhaps your future hinges on the sermon you have listened to tonight, as, not unlikely, who can tell but that it might have been the turning point in the lives of some who, through their own wilful neglect, have remained away.

Everlasting misery may be the consequence of an inspiration we reject, no less than unending bliss may be the reward of an act of obedience to the call of grace. Toward one of two eternities we are continually advancing. Into either of two eternities we must necessarily enter. There is no alternative. We shall be forever with God, beholding His beauty and sharing in His happiness, or forever separated from Him by immense chaos, subject to the most horrible tortures and the most bitter regrets. We know, moreover, that there is only a step between us and the great hereafter. "*Stamus ad littus aeternitatis*"—"We

* *Explanation of the Baltimore Catechism.*—Kinkead.

are standing on the shore of eternity." A rush of blood to the head, a sudden attack of heart failure, the fatal termination of a neglected cold, a stroke of paralysis or apoplexy, and all will be fixed and unchangeable for evermore.

If eternity were a doubtful matter, or only rested on a slender probability, even then we should make every effort in our power to lead a good life, lest, should the doctrine be true, we should thereby expose ourselves to the danger of being forever miserable; but now it is not doubtful, but infallibly certain; not a mere opinion, but a truth of faith. The thought of an unending hereafter cannot, therefore, but be most salutary to the Christian soul; for he that will put eternity and the world before him, and who will dare to look steadfastly at both of them, will find that the more often he contemplates them the former will grow greater and the latter less. "Whoever," says St. Augustine, "meditates upon eternity without reforming his life must either have no faith or no heart." The same distinguished saint calls the thought of eternity "the great thought;" and the venerable Father Avila converted a certain lady who lived at a distance from God by saying to her: "Madam, reflect on these

two words—always and never.” “I thought upon the days of old,” cries out the psalmist, “and I had in my mind the eternal years.”—Ps. lxxvi:6. If we seriously consider this thought, we too must necessarily adopt the maxim of St. Gregory, which was, likewise, the maxim of all God’s servants: “Nulla major securitas, ubi periclitatur aeternitas.” “No security is too great where eternity is at stake.” It was by following such a course, and feeling that they were created for eternity, that the saints found nothing with which they could compare themselves in this world, where everything passes away and is of short duration. Hence, we find a Saint Teresa, while yet a child, withdrawing to a solitary place and repeating over and over again to herself: “To be eternally happy, or eternally miserable.” The young St. Stanislaus Kostka when asked the motive of his apparently singular course of action gave answer: “I am not born for present things, but for eternal ones.” And the angelic youth Aloysius viewed whatever he did from this sole standpoint: “*Quid hoc ad aeternitatem?*” “What will this avail me for eternity?” “*Quidquid non est aeternum, nihil est.*” “Whatever is not eternal, is nothing.” The thought of eter-

nity will do much for us, also, if we, not sometimes only, but always, nourish our souls with it. Remember that the wheels of nature are not made to roll backward; everything presses on toward eternity; from the birth of time an impetuous current has set in, which bears all the sons of men toward that interminable ocean. Meanwhile, heaven is attracting to itself whatever is congenial to its nature—is enriching itself with the spoils of earth, and collecting within its capacious bosom whatever is pure, permanent and divine, leaving nothing for the everlasting fire to consume but the objects and slaves of concupiscence. Go not hence then to-day without manning your souls with firm and generous resolves to obey the voice that calls us to seek the things that are above, and no longer cleave to a world which must shortly perish, and which we must shortly quit, while we neglect to prepare for that in which we are invited to dwell forever.

Let us follow in the track of those veritable heroes, the saints of God, who have taught us by their voice and encouraged us by their example; that, laying aside every weight, and the sin that most easily retards us, "we may push on to the prize of our supernal vocation," and run with

patience the race that is set before us. While everything around us and within us reminds us of the approach of death, and concurs to teach us that this is not our rest, let us hasten our preparations for the grander possibilities of the world beyond the grave, and earnestly implore of the Almighty that grace which alone can put an end to that fatal war which our desires have too long waged with our destiny. When these move in the same direction, and that which the will of heaven renders unavoidable shall have become our choice, all things will be ours, life will be divested of its vanity, and death disarmed of its terrors.

The Old, Old Story—Death.

"Between myself and death there is only one step."—I Kings XX: 13.

"It is appointed unto men once to die."—Heb. IX: 27.

"We sometimes congratulate ourselves at the moment of waking from a troubled dream,—it may be so the moment after death."—Hawthorne.

IV.

There are, I am quite confident, a very great many people in this world of ours, and there may be some among my hearers, sorry though should I be to know them, who are wont to relegate the thought of death to a distant corner of their memory, and to bring it forth from its hiding place only when some louder call awakens their attention and bids them pause and ponder on the brief and transitory tenure of their earthly existence.

With others, however, I feel that it is not so. They realize fully, by experience, meditation and prayer, the teachings of an earlier faith—that man was created to know, love, and serve his Maker; that to fulfill the purpose of life and attain the great end of his existence he must pass through the portals of death, and that, consequently, preparation for this last great act in the drama of life cannot be other than wisdom, and wisdom of the highest type.

In my remarks to you then to-day I feel that I

can tell you nothing new or strange. Possibly, however, I may be able to bring before you some forgotten facts; to revive within you a new line of thought on an old, old topic; and maybe by these means arouse some, at least, to a keener sense of the real purpose of life and the true meaning of death.

It were hardly necessary for me to make here more than a passing reflection on an always interesting truth; "one that never palls, never tires, never grows dull through familiarity, but is always stirring, new and original, namely, that death is inevitable. Yes, death is inevitable. It comes to all. There is no escape, no exception. The aims and purposes that men propose to themselves in life are varied. Different things happen to different men. All destinies are individual. But it is the common destiny to die."—*Father Faber*.

"The small and the great are there," says holy Job, "and the slave is free from his master."—iii:19. "One man dieth strong and hale, rich and happy, but another dieth in bitterness of soul and without any riches. And yet they shall sleep together in the dust, and worms shall cover them."—Id. cxxi:23-25-26.

I know that thou wilt deliver me to death,
where a house is appointed for every one that
liveth.—Id. xxx:23.

"Not to thy eternal resting place
Shalt thou retire alone * * *
* * * Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world—with kings,
The powerful of the earth—the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre.
* * * All that breathe
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
Plod on, and each one, as before, will chase
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave
Their mirth and their employments and shall come
And make their bed with thee. As the long train
Of ages glide away, the sons of men,
The youth in life's green spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years, matron and maid,
And the sweet babe, and the gray-headed man,
Shall, one by one, be gathered to thy side
By those, who, in their turn, shall follow them."

—William Cullen Bryant: *Thanatopsis*.

We must, therefore, submit ourselves to the
inevitable, reconcile ourselves to the certainty,
advancing to meet the unavoidable as soldiers
advance to give the countersign, marching from
the barracks or the picket-post to the great gen-
eral's headquarters.

Furthermore, death is an act of which we can have no experience, for the reason that it can be done only once. No, we can have no experience of dying. No one has ever yet returned to tell us what death is like, or how it feels to die, or whether the actual act of dissolution is accompanied by sensation or not. A man who through disease or casualty has lost consciousness,—has become to all appearances dead—and is then resuscitated, can really tell us nothing about it, for he did not die; the life force did not leave the body. The poet has delved deep into the awful mystery of death, and may have descried terrors invisible to human view, but beyond this he cannot go. "I have stood," says a celebrated physician, "by the death-bed of men who told me they were going to destruction, and I saw them pass peacefully to their long last sleep. I have looked at their dead faces a few minutes later, and saw thereon a look of fear, of horror, that was not visible when the heart gave its faint throb and then stood still. I have had others tell me, almost with their last gasp, that they were going to heaven. They passed away with wan, weary faces that were pitiful to contemplate, but before they became rigid a sweet smile, as of an angel's

dream, overspread the pallid features. The deep lines of suffering faded out, and the aged looked almost youthful; the weary and wan became radiant.

What causes this change? When does death actually occur? We say when the breath and the pulse cease. But who can give us undeniable assurance that this is really death after all? Who can say that the spirit takes its departure from earth with the last breath, the last faint heart-beat? May it not cling for some moments to its shattered tenement ere it wings its flight, before it faces those terrors, or enters into those transcendent glories which await it in the great hereafter?"

"Father," said the child, "what is Death?"

"The rest, my child,

When the strife and the toil are o'er;

The angel of God, who, calm and mild,

Says we need fight no more;

Who, driving away the demon band,

Bids the din of the battle cease;

Takes banner and spear from our falling hand,

And proclaims an eternal peace."

"Let me die, father! I tremble and fear

To yield in that terrible strife!"

"The crown must be won for heaven, dear,

In the battle-field of life;

My child, though thy foes are strong and tried,

He loveth the weak and small;
The angels of Heaven are on thy side,
And God is over all!"—*Adelaide A. Proctor.*

Father Faber, who has written so learnedly and so beautifully on such a variety of themes, who could stretch a thought to almost incomparable length, and yet who, we know not why, is seemingly being supplanted in the domain of spirituality and letters by others less fitted to survive, speaks thus:

"The separation of body and soul which we call death, the end of that long companionship between them is a mystery we have never been able to fathom, and which we should have imagined, if we had not been otherwise taught, involved our very existence. Life without a body is difficult to picture. We only know that there is such a life; that it is a very wonderful one, wherever it is lived; and that we shall some day and somewhere live it ourselves. But, how the soul will disentangle itself from that complicated body in which it now lives ubiquitiously, we cannot tell."

Science, in her bold flights, has gone far, it is true, but it has not yet lifted the veil of mystery which the Almighty has hung over the couch of

death. It speaks no word of relief when tears gush forth and sorrow sears the soul. It extends no helping hand when misfortune smites and the blows of adversity fall thick and fast. Coldly it looks down on the grave, where all that is dear to us lies hidden forever, and silently pursues its path of knowledge. In our darkest hour, when all joy seems drained from our life, and despair flaps her cheerless wings as we lay away in the cold, dull clay all that gave to life its sunshine and its charm, go to the scientist then, and what will he do? He will take the tear we shed, analyze it into its component parts, and for our comfort will explain the law that with unswerving fidelity does its fatal work. Does this satisfy us? Can we still the turbulent emotions, or feed the hungering soul, with scientific apparatus and a demonstration of laws and rules? As well might the weak voice of the child outroar the wild and furious raging of the storm. But when fortune frowns, and all looks dark and drear, then it is, if ever, that religion comes to our aid. In the dark and gloomy night of death religion throws a halo of light and peace around the Christian soul. "Christian hope then sees a star and listening love catches the rustle of angelic

wings." Then it is that out of its capacious bosom flows the calm and refreshing stream of joy and comfort; for, though the heavens be never so black the star of hope shines with unfading lustre for the truly fervent and pious soul. Religion lays its gentle hand upon the shoulder bent with suffering and points upward to that celestial realm where sorrow is a thing unknown and tears can never fall. The clouds are rifted, and amid a glorious brightness there resounds a tender voice, exclaiming in accents of pity and of love: "Noli temere; ego tecum."—"Fear not, for I am with you." "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away."—Apoc. cxxi:4.

"If then," to return again to Father Faber, "we have no experience of dying, what follows? Something of very grave importance,—which is not without terror also—namely, that, as we have no experience of it, we can form no habit of it, and it is habit which at once makes the thing to be done easier, and us who do it calmer in the doing. But, may not this be said of any important action which is to be done for the first time?

Certainly. But then it is another feature of death that with it there is no next time. It can be done but once. Everything, therefore, depends upon the doing of it well. However it is done, well or ill, it is simply irreparable. Once over, all discussion, deliberation, retrospect, discovery of mistakes, fresh plans, are out of the question. It was one, final, absolute, immutable act; and, now that it is done, it must be left as it is, helplessly fertile of eternal consequences."

Sisara was nailed fast by the hand of Jael in the place and attitude in which he went to sleep; thus will death place us permanently in the situation in which it will find us. "If the tree fall to the south, or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it lie."—Eccles. xi:3.

If when death comes we are found in the grace of God, happy shall we be forevermore. But, if death shall find our souls in sin, we shall exclaim bitterly and despairingly "*ergo erravimus!*"—"therefore we have erred," and for our error there shall be no remedy for endless ages of ages. It is related of an ancient king, Dionysius of Sicily, I think, that, to make one of his subjects understand the fear with which he occupied the throne, he commanded him to sit at table with a sword

suspended over him by a slender thread. The apprehension that the thread should give way filled him with so much terror that he could scarcely taste food. We are all, friends, in like danger; for the sword of death, on which depends our eternal salvation, may at any moment fall upon us and cut the slender thread of life.

With reason, then, did the fear of an unhappy eternity cause the venerable Father Avila, the Apostle of Spain, to exclaim on receiving the notice of his death: "Oh, that I had a little more time to prepare for it!" That the same fear should induce the holy Abbot Agatho, who spent so many years in penance, to cry aloud at the hour of his dissolution: "Alas! What will become of me? Who can know the judgments of God, which are other than those of men?" That St. Arsenius, on being asked by his disciples the cause of his alarm, should reply: "My children, this fear is not new to me; I have had it always during my whole life." Or that holy Job should tremble when he said: "What shall I do when the Lord shall rise to judge? And when He shall examine, what shall I answer Him?"—xxxix:14.

"The worst reality," however, as the author of

Ben Hur comfortingly reminds us, "is never unendurable when it comes out from behind the cloud through which we at first saw it darkly, never." Let us hope it may be so with death. Yet, all men fear it, and some fear it so terribly that it shadows their whole life. The infidel may boast as he will of not fearing death, and boldly proclaim his assurance that after this present life there is absolutely nothing; but there is in every human heart an instinctive consciousness of a future existence, and that consciousness can never be entirely obliterated. The blackest criminal, hardened by his crimes and transgressions, must at times, despite all efforts to the contrary, tremble at the idea of confronting the eternal, inexorable Judge; while the most pronounced atheist cannot but feel his very heart sink within him when his thoughts dwell upon death and its possible consequences.

Shakespeare, with his remarkable faculty for grasping and strongly expressing great ideas, makes Hamlet say:

"To be, or not to be, that is the question—
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,

And by opposing, end them? To die, to sleep—
 No more; and, by a sleep, to say we end
 The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to!—'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wished. To die,—to sleep—
 To sleep!—perchance to dream!—Aye, there's the rub:
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
 Must give us pause. There's the respect
 That makes calamity of so long life:
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
 The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
 The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus make
 With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
 To groan and sweat under a weary life,
 But that the dread of something after death—
 That undiscovered country, from whose bourn
 No traveler returns—puzzles the will,
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
 Than fly to others that we know not of?"

—*Hamlet's Soliloquy on Death. Act III, Sc. I.*

Yes, I emphatically repeat that it is with reason we fear death. Death is the punishment of original prevarication; hence comes that wholesome horror with which we repel it. A clergyman once met a little boy crying bitterly at his father's door, afraid to go in. He asked him what was the matter, and he replied that his

mother had sent him out clean in the morning, but he had soiled his clothes and so he feared to go in because his father would punish him. Thus is it with us all. We have soiled our characters by sin; and, therefore, we fear death—we dread the meeting with our Father.

The young fear death, because preparation for it is so uncongenial to their habits of thought and time of life. They dwell in brightness, and experience has not told them yet how really autumnal is the very spring of youth. The old *must* fear death because it is so near. Its shadow is already on them, and they shiver because the sunshine is intercepted. Yes, and the sinner fears death because his penance is not yet done; and the preacher only irritates him when he says that the longer death is delayed the less likely is he to die repentant.

The fear of death, however, is not in itself an evil, since this fear is innate and abides in us as a memorial of our primitive immortality. The great evil is to fear death more than sin; or rather to love sin, while the mere thought of death makes us tremble. "If it be an evil," says Bossuet, "for the body to have lost its soul, is it not by far worse for the soul to have lost its

God? And if we be horrified at the sight of a corpse lying on the ground deprived of motion and of life, is it not more horrible still to consider a human soul become a spiritual corpse which, being separated from God by sin, has no longer any life or sentiment except what renders its own death eternal?"

Of course the really devout and practical Catholic, the one who has tried, at least, to serve his Maker well and faithfully his whole life long, cannot see in death anything mystic or uncertain. That holy and wholesome fear which he feels has ever been a part of his nature, becomes at last the smoothest pillow upon which his dying head can repose. Death is not for him the "undiscovered country" of Hamlet's Soliloquy, but rather, as Tennyson beautifully expresses it:

"The great world's Altar stairs
That slope through darkness up to God."

Memoriam.

The Old, Old Story—Death.

"I know not how long I shall continue, and whether after awhile my Maker may take me away."—Job XXXII : 22.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."—Ps. CXV : 15.

"Watch, because you know not the day nor the hour."—St. Matt. XXV : 13.

"And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch."
—St. Mark XIII : 31.

"Be ready, for at what hour you think not the Son of Man will come."—St. Luke XII : 40.

"It is uncertain at what place death awaits thee. Wait thou for it at every place."—Seneca.

"Let death and exile, and all other things which appear terrible, be daily before your eyes, but death chiefly, and you will never entertain any abject thought, nor too eagerly covet anything."

—Epictetus.

V.

In the ancient city of Venice, the royal palace and the great penal institution of the government are connected by a curious and dismal looking structure called the "Bridge of Sighs." This bridge is so named for the reason that he who crosses it from the palace, to expiate in the prison on the opposite side the punishment that his crime has merited, is sadly certain that his doom is forever sealed, and that he shall never again be restored to liberty and life.

Having spoken to you in preceding sermons on the tremendous subjects of Time and Eternity, it is only right and proper that we should take our stand and journey together to-night, in our reflections, on that mysterious bridge that separates these two periods of our existence, a bridge that we must all eventually pass over—the mysterious bridge of death.

The race has been star-gazing since the birth of time; yet, "it is a strange thing," as Ruskin remarks, "how little, in general, people know

about the sky." Man has been looking into the face of death since the stars first cast their twinkling rays upon him; yet what, after all, do we know about it? If life is a riddle, surely death is a mystery. We all perfectly realize, with the bard of Avon, that "we must endure our going hence, even as our coming hither;" that death is, and must be, for each and every one of us. "Yet, how strangely mysterious is the law that presides over the departure of souls from this world! Young or old, tarnished with vice or resplendent with virtue, they disappear into silence. They go forth without telling who summons them, without saying why or how. Their faces suddenly set toward eternity, and look back on us no more."
—*Anon.*

Elsewhere we have generalized on this old, old topic; here we will endeavor to bring the subject more intimately home to ourselves; and this, too, by following a very ordinary and commonplace current of thought. Truly, there is no subject with which we have been so long familiar, none that presents itself so continually before our eyes in every possible shape and form, and with all the circumstances with which we are so well acquainted, as the old-time subject of death. It is

moreover, of all subjects that pertain to man, by far the most important, inasmuch as in it are concentrated his dearest interests both for time and eternity. "The bed of death," says our American Demosthenes, Daniel Webster, "brings every human being to his pure individuality; to the intense contemplation of that deepest and most solemn of all relations, the relation between the creature and his Creator."

It is the pivot on which all man's happiness turns; the harbor where he casts anchor, or is wrecked forever. Death is, indeed, no stranger to us; the ever-varying aspect of nature's scenery, the common occurrences of daily life, are continually suggesting to us the sad lesson of our mortality, and of that goal toward which we are hourly, nay momentarily, traveling.

The marble monuments that loom over the hilltops of every village and city throughout the length and breadth of the land, the habiliments of sorrow that deck the forms of persons in every walk of life, the solemn and impressive ceremonies with which, from time to time, Holy Church engages our attention, all, all forcibly remind us that we, too, are passing away, and that perhaps, ere the rising of the morrow's sun,

or the going down thereof, we shall have taken our place in the silent halls of death. Everything dies; and on this balmy summer morning if I lay my ear to the ground I seem to hear, from every point of the compass, the heavy step of men who carry a corpse to its burial. Longfellow, in his exquisite little poem, "The Reaper and the Flowers," has beautifully likened this whole world to one vast field, in which "Death with his sickle keen" labors every minute, every second.

"He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between."

We may be now like the grass that is most distant from the steel; there may be acres upon acres between us and the severing blade, but the strong, patient Reaper is nearing us, slowly perhaps, but surely. Listen! Listen, and we can almost catch the sharp swish of his scythe and hear the murmur of the falling grass. These admonitions, enforced, as they are so frequently, by the happening to some among us of that event which, sooner or later, must happen to us all, are drowned, nevertheless, in the turmoil of the busy world. It is only the louder call that awakens our attention, when death has struck down some

"shining mark," and bids us pause and ponder on the brief and transitory tenor of our earthly existence.

And yet, "though there is nothing we may call our own but death, and that small model of the barren earth which serves as paste and cover to our bones,"* notwithstanding our intimate connections with it, there is hardly anything, perhaps, in the whole range of human history more strikingly singular than the apathy with which man regards this tremendous subject. For the possession of a little gilded dust, the acquirement of an imaginary honor, or the enjoyment of a short-lived pleasure, men will brave innumerable obstacles, nay, will suffer almost any privation; but for the attainment of an eternity of felicity, or the avoidance of never-ending misery which depends on death, they are loath to undergo the slightest exertion. Is it any wonder then that when the grim monster comes at last, he comes when least expected, and that the soul, unapprised of its peril, is enslaved and lost forever? Let us, learning wisdom from the folly of others, endeavor now and for all time, to obtain

* *Shakespeare.*

a vivid representation of that last harrowing drama in which we shall all figure; so that if we expect to meet death as a friend we may prepare to entertain him; if as an enemy, to overcome him. Though language is rich on the subject of death, still the whole topic may be summed up in two very brief considerations, namely, the absolute certainty that we shall die, and the utter uncertainty as to the time and circumstances of our death.

Reason, revelation, and the experience of nearly six thousand years convince us of the fact that our life here below is only a dreary exile, and that, whoever would enter the portals of his true country must first pass through the low door of the tomb. Death alone is certain. I know not whether the child that has just been brought into being will attain the years of manhood, or whether he will be called away in the days of his purity and innocence. I cannot say whether he will grow up a peace-abiding citizen, a credit to his parents and an honor to society, or whether he will become the scourge of humanity, and the contemnor of all law and authority. I know not whether he will be rich or poor, learned or unlearned, wise or unwise; but what I do know,

beyond the possibility of a doubt, is that he will most certainly die.

I cannot say whether, in the inscrutable designs of the Almighty, I who speak, or you who hear my words, am destined for long or short duration; but what I know most surely is, that a day will come when I shall never see the night, or a night in which I shall never behold the morning. Men have doubted every assertion, have denied almost every other truth, but this one never. For what sane man would ever attempt to question a fact which hourly experience confirms? Yes, "it is appointed for all men once to die." The irreversible decree has been issued against us; and, not till the awakening blast of the Archangel's trumpet will have proclaimed to the buried nations that time shall be no more, will the weird spectre waive his right to claim us as his own. "The wages of sin is death," says the apostle. Therefore so surely as we are sinners, so surely shall we die. Millions and millions of men have appeared on earth and passed away like shadows—Solomon with his wisdom, Caesar with his victories, Croesus with his riches. These and the innumerable host of the departed great exemplify the melancholy theme.

The fairest pictures that hang on memory's walls are associated with the sad image of death. Alas! how often have we not wept over the tombs of those who had smiled about our cradle? How many have been the companions of the sunny hours of childhood, the friends of our riper years, that are now no more! How numberless the beings who, starting out on the journey of life long after ourselves, have yet preceded us to the tomb! On occasions of joy and gladness we assemble around the festive board, but miss the beaming countenance, the loving glance, of one we always reckoned among the good and pure. And oh how often, when weighed down with the trials and sorrows of a cold, unfeeling world, have we not turned for encouragement and sympathy to the fond friends that live in our hearts, only to be startled by the bitter remembrance that the icy hand of death has snatched them from our side. Yes, the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the saint and the sinner, have alike fallen victims to the relentless destroyer. We have mourned over the lost friends of our tenderest affection; we have heard the cold and cruel clods of earth fall thick and heavily on the last mortal remains of the faithful

and the true, the kindest and the best. We have seen the strong man cast down in the midst of his strength, and the powerful in the days of his prosperity. We have beheld the gay and buoyant-hearted grow weak and falter in the midst of their most ardent expectations, and finally lay down the burden of life in their brightest and palmiest days. Where is the home from which we do not miss the loving father, the tender mother, the gentle sister, or the kind and affectionate brother? Earth's fairest prospects are blighted, the dwellings of wealth and plenty rendered sad and desolate, because an idolized parent, or a fond and endearing child has been suddenly and unexpectedly cut down by the remorseless "King of Terrors." Neither the sighs and lamentations of the penitent Magdalen, the transplendent sanctity of the Holy Precursor, nor the burning love of the Virgin Disciple, nor not even the unsullied purity of the Immaculate Mother of God Himself could retard the tyrant in his course, or ward off the fatal consequence of our primeval transgression. The most beautiful life that was ever lived on earth went out amid the torturing gloom that enshrouded the summit of Mount Calvary. "Yes, O Jesus, Thou

too hast deigned to die in order that we might live! Thy bitter death is the vast sunset, in which we all sink to rest; it lingers on earth's horizon till the day of doom, and we all set in it, encompassed with a mellow glory which radiates from Thy five most precious wounds."* They who have lived longest have been obliged to succumb at last. Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years, and he died; Mathusala nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died. The sum total of the history of the patriarchs of the law, as well as of all the men that have ever breathed the breath of life, is recorded in that one pithy sentence: "They lived, and they died." So, likewise, what we now say of others will one day be said of us: "They lived, and they died." Where are all those who once made the world resound with the story of their greatness? They are dead. Where are the mighty ones of ages long gone by, the heroes and sages of Greece and Rome? The grave answers, they are no more; they have gone the way of all flesh; and from proud mausoleum or storied urn they echo back the never-ceasing wail of all past generations:

* *Father Faber.*

"Yesterday it was our turn, to-morrow it will be yours." "O eloquent, just and mighty Death! Whom none could advise thou hast persuaded, what none hath dared thou hast done, and whom all the world hath flattered thou only hast cast out of the world and despised. Thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty and ambition of men, and covered it all over with these two narrow words: Hic jacet! Here he lies!"—*Sir Walter Raleigh*.

Death, therefore, is most certain, and nothing can avert the dismal stroke that lies pending over us all. Could honors, wealth or social position exonerate anyone from the general doom that threatens all humanity, some, indeed, might claim exemption; but all

"Await alike the inevitable hour—

The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

— *Gray's Elegy*.

Death is the wish of some, the relief of many, and the end of all. It sets the slave at liberty, carries the banished man home, and teaches all of poor humanity that it is dust. "Men's faces, looking into a sunset," says Father Faber, "are golden; so will our lives be if they are always looking into the face of coming death."

"Death is as near to the young as to the old," writes Rev. Thomas Adams; "here is all the difference: death stands behind the young man's back, before the old man's face." And Cicero tells us that "the whole life of a philosopher is the meditation of his death." "Blessed," declares the devout à Kempis, "is he who keepeth the hour of his death continually before his eyes and daily putteth himself in order for death." Book i:xxiii. Yes, and blessed beyond measure, too, is he who endeavors to realize, ever more and more, that whatever else betide, after all

"Death is the only discipline we are born for;
All studies else are but as circular lines,
And death the center, where they all must meet."

—*Anon.*

But, as death is certain, so, too, are the time and circumstances of its coming most uncertain. When shall I die? Will it be in the morning or in the evening, at noontide or at the lonely hour of midnight? Shall I be summoned hence in the pleasant days of spring, the balmy hours of summer, or will my flight be in the cold and dreary time of winter? Shall I live till the wrinkles of age will have furrowed my brow, or will the passing cloud of death dim the brilliant lustre of my

life just as it is attaining its meridian splendor? Alas! of this none of us can have any positive assurance; for "who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who shall search His testimonies?" Well and truthfully, then, was it said:

"Leaves have their time to fall,

And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,
And stars to set;—but all,

Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death."

—*Felicia Hemans.*

Where shall I die? Will it be in the gay and crowded city, or in the quiet and retirement of the country? Shall I breathe my last in the sacred asylum of home, surrounded by the dearest ties that bind me to earth, or shall I meet my end in the trackless wilds of some foreign clime, neglected and alone? Will it be beneath the scorching rays of a tropical sun, or where boundless snows infest the circuit of the dreary year? Will my wan and emaciated body be consigned to that fit receptacle, the tomb, there to commingle with the dust from which it borrowed its existence, or shall my bones be cradled in the depths of the mighty ocean, where every passing gale will sing my requiem as ages fade into each other? Will death leap out of its ambush

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upon me, and claim me as the hopeless victim of eternal ruin just as I am in the act of transgressing God's holy law, or shall I be called away when in the exact performance of every duty?

How shall I die? Will loving friends be there to raise my drooping head, to print the last kiss of love and affection on my pale and sunken cheek? Will God's anointed be at my side to administer the last consolations of Holy Church, to soothe my lonely soul in its voyage to the "undiscovered country?" Shall I, with the peace of heaven on my countenance and the God of the Eucharist within my breast, be borne by gentle attendant angels to the abodes of the blest, or will angry demons, amid the despairing cries of disconsolate friends, convey my lost and unhappy soul to the gloomy halls of the damned? Will the lamp of my life be gradually consumed by a painful and lingering disease, or shall I be called hence without even time to say "Lord have mercy on my soul?" Alas, alas! I know not. I only know that I shall die; but when, or where, or how, are secrets that lie buried in the impenetrable knowledge and wisdom of that Almighty Being Who has doomed us all to undergo the

bitter stroke of death, but has reserved for Himself the time and manner of its visitation.

Since, then, death is so undeniably certain, and the time and circumstances of its coming so utterly unknown, does it not behoove us to be always on the alert, lest, like the foolish virgins of the gospel, the bridegroom come and find us unprepared? Would it not be the very height of folly to postpone, even for one single instant, preparation for an event on which depends our happiness or misery for all eternity? Oh, let us be wise in time. Let us lose no opportunity to secure for ourselves that grace of graces—a good death. In the midst of hopes and cares, apprehensions and disquietudes, let us regard every day that dawns upon us as though it were to be our last. Let us oftentimes, even in the enjoyment of health, contemplate our last end, and that final dissolution that will terminate this present life. Let us fancy to ourselves that this event may take place at any moment; and at the foot of the crucifix offer the sacrifice of the dearest considerations that bind us to our present state. It is by doing thus, and thus only, that when the summons comes for us to follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before, we may,

fortified by the last rites of our Holy Church, and an unfaltering confidence in Jesus, Mary and Joseph, close our eyes on the receding glories of this world only to open them forever on the grander possibilities of the world to come.

"So live, that, when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, that moves
To the pale realm of shade, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go, not like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon; but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him and lies down to pleasant dreams."

—*Bryant's Thanatopsis.*

The Tongue.

VI.

THE TONGUE.

"The boneless tongue, so small and weak,
Can crush and kill," declared the Greek.

"The tongue destroys a greater horde,"
The Turk asserts, "than does the sword."

The Persian proverb wisely saith:
"A lengthy tongue, an early death."

Or sometimes takes this form instead:
"Don't let your tongue cut off your head."

"The tongue can speak a word whose speed,"
Says the Chinese, "outstrips the steed."

While Arab sages this impart:
"The tongue's great storehouse is the heart."

From Hebrew wit this maxim sprung:
"Though feet should slip, ne'er let the tongue."

The sacred writer crowns the whole:
"Who keeps his tongue doth keep his soul."—*Anon.*

"Who keeps his tongue doth keep his soul."—Prov.
xiii:3.

Among the distinguishing endowments which
God in His all-wise providence has bestowed

upon man, and by which he is elevated in his nature and power far above all other terrestrial beings, none is, perhaps, more prominent, or places him so strikingly in contrast with other creatures, than the gift of speech—the power of expressing to others, by words, his thoughts, his feelings, and his wants. To realize the immense value of such a gift we have but to ask ourselves the question—"What would man be without it?"

Without it would vanish all the wondrous works of his mind and hands which we behold around us. In fact, we could not at all imagine him living in a world like ours; for without the power of intercommunication there would also be wanting the co-operation necessary to accomplish the marvels therein contained.

That there is in us an animal, aye, a bestial nature, has never been denied.

"We cannot be reminded too often that all the materials of our knowledge we share with animals; that like them we begin with sensuous impressions and then, like ourselves, and like ourselves only, we proceed to the general, the ideal, and the eternal. We cannot be reminded too often that in many things we are like the beasts of the field, but that like ourselves, and like our-

selves only, we can rise superior to our bestial self and strive after what is unselfish, good and Godlike."—*Friedrich Maximilian Muller*.

"What is it that constitutes and makes man what he is?" asks a well-known scientist.*

"What is it but his power of language, giving him the means of recording his experiences, and making every generation wiser than its predecessor.

"What is it but this power of speech, which enables men to be men, looking before and after, and, in some dim sense, understanding the workings of this wondrous universe."

Even in a country where the roses have no fragrance, and the magistrates no sense of honor; where the needle points to the south, and the old men fly kites; where the roads bear no vehicles, and the ships no keels; where the place of honor is on your left hand, and the seat of intellect is in the stomach; where to take off your hat is an insolent gesture, and to wear white garments is to put yourself in mourning—even there we are not astonished to find the most intricate and unwieldy vehicle of thought that ever

* *Thomas Henry Huxley*.

obtained among any people, a literature without an alphabet, and a language without a grammar."

—*Geo. Wingrove Cooke.*

"The tongue can speak a word whose speed,"
Says the Chinese, "outstrips the steed."

Furthermore, it is remarkable that the lowest of savages—men whose language is said to be no better than the clucking of hens or the twittering of birds, and who have been declared, in many respects, lower than even animals, possess this one specific characteristic, that if you take one of their babes and bring it up, say in America, it will learn to speak as well as any American-born child; while no amount of education will elicit any attempts at language from the highest animals, whether biped or quadruped.—Adapted from Max Müller.

Language, then, is the one great barrier between the brute and man. Man speaks, and no brute has ever uttered a word. To man alone has this wonderful faculty of talking been given, and its regulation should be considered by him as one of his most important duties—to see that it is used in a manner beneficial to himself and to

others, and for the purpose alone for which it was bestowed upon him.

But alas! If we look around on the circle of general society, we shall find that this, like every other precious gift with which man has been blessed, is not only sadly abused, but worse; that conversation not alone useless and gossipy, but even malicious and scandalous, is a pervading evil, and that the injuries and mischief diffused by it are almost incredible.

We hold up our hands in holy horror against the bull fights of Spain, and all right-minded men do likewise against those human bull fights that are disgracing our boasted American civilization; yet we can sit and applaud when we hear men, and even women, attack each other with the most deadly, the most poisonous, the most cutting weapon that can be imagined—the tongue.

You have all, doubtless, either read or heard of the philosopher of olden times who told his servant that he had invited some of his friends to dine with him, and that he wanted him to get the best thing that he could find in the market. When the day for the banquet arrived, and the philosopher and his guests sat down to dinner,

they were very much surprised to find nothing before them but tongue;—four or five courses of tongue—tongue served in one way, and tongue served in another way, so that before the dinner was over the philosopher quite lost his patience and said to the servant: "Did I not tell you to get the best thing the market could afford?" "And have I not done so," replied the servant. "Is not the tongue the organ of eloquence, the organ of kindness, the organ of worship?" "Well, then," continued the philosopher, "to-morrow I shall give another dinner, and I want you to get the worst thing in the market." On the morrow, when the philosopher and his friends again took their places at table, there was nothing before them but tongue;—four or five courses of tongue—tongue in this shape, and tongue in that shape, so that the philosopher entirely lost patience and said to his servant: "Did I not tell you to get the worst thing in the market?" "And have I not done so," replied the servant. "Is not the tongue the organ of blasphemy, the organ of defamation, the organ of calumny and lying?"

"A tart temper," says a learned writer,* "never

* *Washington Irving.*

mel lows with age, and a sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use." And the apostle St. James does not hesitate to declare that "the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. We put bits," he says, "into the mouths of horses that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body. Great ships are driven by strong winds, yet they are moved about with a small helm whithersoever the force of the governor willeth. So also the tongue is, indeed, a little member, and boasteth great things."—ciii.

"Every nature of beasts and of bird and of serpent," he continues, "is tamed and hath been tamed by the nature of man. But the tongue no man can tame, an unquiet evil full of deadly poison. By it we bless God and the Father, and by it we curse men who are made after the likeness of God."—Id. "The whisperer and the double-tongued is accursed," says the scripture, "for he hath troubled many that were at peace." The tongue of a third person hath disquieted many, and scattered them from nation to nation. It hath destroyed the strong cities of the rich and overthrown the houses of the great. He that hearkeneth to it shall never have rest, neither shall he have a friend in whom he may repose.

The stroke of a whip maketh a blue mark, but the stroke of the tongue will break the bones.

"The boneless tongue, so small and weak,
Can crush and kill," declares the Greek.

Many have fallen by the edge of the sword, but not so many as have perished by their own tongues.

"The tongue destroys a greater horde,"
The Turk asserts, "than does the sword."

"Hedge in thy ears with thorns and make doors and bars to thy mouth. Melt down thy gold and silver and make a balance for thy words, and a just bridle for thy mouth, and take heed lest thou slip with thy tongue and fall in the sight of thy enemies, who lie in wait for thee, and thy fall be incurable unto death."—Eccles. xxviii.

This is strong language, surely, but it is the language of inspiration. "He that setteth bounds to his words," says Solomon, "is knowing and wise," and, to be able to govern well the tongue is accounted so great a virtue that the apostle St. James assures us that "if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." While, on the contrary, "if any man think himself religious, not bridling his tongue, that man's religion is vain."

Do you wish, then, to become a virtuous and perfect man, a saint even? The apostle St. James assures you that silence will accomplish your desires, for silence never yet betrayed any one. Tell me, did you ever know a great talker that was much given to prayer or to any other spiritual duty? No, certainly not; for the heart of the talkative man is continually taken up with vain and unprofitable entertainments, and is always wandering abroad and occupied with useless and frivolous objects. Therefore, the Holy Ghost says: "He that uses many words wounds his own soul."—Eccles. xx. "Where there is much talk sin will not be wanting;" and, lastly, "to speak much is a very great folly."

In these enlightened days we are too apt to be led away by talk. Indeed, it may be said that to talk is as easy as to walk. Ah, yes; and in fact there are some who find it, by their very nature, difficult to do much walking, but who can sit all day and talk. But do you know that the common fluency of speech in many men and most women is owing to a scarcity of words? For whoever is a master of language, and has a mind full of ideas, will be apt, in speaking, to hesitate upon the choice of both, whereas common speak-

ers have only one kind of ideas, and one set of words to clothe them in, and these are always ready at the mouth, just as you can go faster out of church when it is almost empty than you can when a crowd is at the door. It is, then, concerning the way in which people differ in the spirit or intention that impels the action of the tongue that I wish to direct your attention, or rather, I wish to show you some of the particular ways in which a person, by perverting the power of talking, becomes to others if not pernicious, at least extremely ridiculous, and even disgusting. There is one class of talkers who on account of their blind self conceit are more to be pitied than condemned. They are what is known in common phrase as terrible talkers, and they derive their title not so much from the terrible nature, as from the terrible amount of talking that they do. These poor creatures seem to think that the main purpose of their existence is to keep the tongue going, and that it was given to them solely as a means of self-glorification. Concerning any subject, they, of course, know it all. They are always the heroes of their own stories; you cannot talk to them five minutes before you know their business, or their profession, and the

sagacious and dexterous manner in which they manage the affairs of life. Wearied? Never. They could talk the bark off a tree. From their lips flows a stream of words as steady as water shoots up from a fountain. They remind us of the old rhyme of our school days:

"From morning till night
'Tis their constant delight
To chatter and talk without stopping;
Nor is there a day
But they rattle away
Like water that's constantly dropping."

One would suppose that this was the only chance that characters of this kind ever had, and that if they were compelled to bottle up the gas that is fermenting within it would surely explode. And what seems to be the strangest feature of all is that these poor creatures are vain enough to suppose that their conversation is as pleasant and as agreeable to every one else as it is to themselves. There are braying men in the world as well as braying beasts; for what is loud, incessant, senseless talking anything other than braying? Of course, all professions have their incessant talkers; in fact, they are found in almost every department of life. The pettifogger

will bluster and thunder for hours at a time on mere trifles, where a sensible use of fifteen minutes would be more than sufficient to exhaust the entire subject. In cities men will gather in squads and will talk incessantly on matters concerning which they never read ten lines. The gossiping village band will dispose of more state questions during an afternoon or evening than an ingenious diplomatist could review in a lifetime. And, oh, it is frightful to contemplate the ruin that even one evil, irreligious man, in city or town, is able to accomplish! If such would only confine the noxious wares of their own unholy minds to themselves little would be lost! But no, they must peddle them off on the otherwise good and well-disposed. Not content with having denuded their own temple of images they must go about and shatter the God of other people. If you ever run across one of this description keep him at arm's length, if you prize your own soul and the souls of those under your care. Demosthenes, one of the most celebrated orators of antiquity, was wont to say that "as a vessel is known by its sound whether it be cracked or not, so men are proved by their talk whether they be wise or foolish."

Now, of this much we may rest assured; if we have an inordinate desire for talking just for talk's sake, to be arguing and dogmatizing simply for the sake of gratifying our vanity, appearing odd, or to obtain the reputation of being considered smart, if we are always the first in giving our views and expressing our opinion, we may depend upon it we will soon, to use a common phrase, "be played out." And although it is said that the American people submit to more humbugs than any other nation, still they are not slow in discovering a "pest," and once he or she is discovered his or her name is ever after associated with mental torture.

There is another class of talkers who, while likewise free from any direct intention of doing wrong, are indeed the cause of a great deal of wrong. They resemble very much the terrible talkers in the amount of loquacity they possess, but in its dissemination generally choose as an object the sayings and doings of others rather than their own. These are of the frivolous, gossiping kind, who, if not meddling in the affairs of others, and prying into their neighbors' houses to discover secrets and then spread them abroad, are at least continually engaged in a sort of fool-

ish prattle regarding the most useless and trifling matters.

There is a great deal of philosophy in the saying that every man has in his own life follies enough, in the performance of his duty deficiencies enough, in his own mind trouble enough, without being curious after the affairs of others. And, in truth, a man who cannot mind his own business is not fit to be entrusted with the business of another; for the busybody, like the tail of Samson's foxes, carries firebrands, and is enough to set the whole field of the world aflame.

It may be true that all are not saints that are talked about; but it is certain that they are not all saints either who do the talking. The scandal-lovers of society, who seek to discover human faults, not to cure them, but to tell them to the world, are blacker than the victims of their malicious sport. It is well to think twice before you believe every story you hear, and twenty times before you repeat it. We all know that people sometimes tell falsehoods, that they often make mistakes; and that they sometimes hear wrong, especially if they are a little deaf. There is auricular illusion, as well as optical illusion. Take all these things into consideration, then,

before you believe. As for repeating what you have heard, candidly ask yourself if it is necessary. If it is so, then do it with the remembrance of the Golden Rule before you. Give the helping hand, not the downward push. It was capital advice, which a good mother once gave her child: "My child," said she, "if you ever hear anything foul in the street leave it in the gutter, do not bring it into the house."

The art of not hearing everything, as well as of not repeating everything we do hear, is an art that should be more generally learned. There are so many things which it is painful to hear; very many, which, if heard, will disturb the temper, corrupt simplicity and modesty, and detract from contentment and happiness. If a man falls into a violent passion and calls us all manner of names, at the first word we should shut our ears and hear no more. If in a quiet voyage of life we find ourselves caught in one of those domestic whirlwinds of scolding so common in many families, we should shut our ears, as the sailor would furl his sail, and, making all tight, scud before the gale. It is not worth while, if you really look into it, to hear what your neighbors say about your children, what your rivals say about your

business, or what the young miss, that probably does not like you, and feels that she is just as good as you are, says about the hang of your new dress or the style of your best hat. If all the petty things said about one by heedless or ill-natured idlers were brought home to him he would become a mere walking pincushion, stuck full of sharp remarks.

The terrible talkers and the gossipers are, however, much less to be dreaded than those who knowingly and wilfully abuse the gift of speech, and glory in the evil that their malicious talk effects. These people are never happier than when they see the most tender feelings of another pierced to the heart by a cold-blooded slash of their merciless tongues. With what complete satisfaction do they witness the shame and confusion they have brought upon another by exposing his faults and misdoings!

What a victory they have won when by their deceitful talk they have succeeded in destroying the love of the nearest and dearest! In others, of course, they see no good, and they are always ready and skillful enough to give to all the actions of others an appearance of guilt. If their neighbor is a God-fearing and conscientious man,

they call him weak-minded and silly. If he is faithful in his attendance at Holy Mass, and regular in approaching the Sacraments, they say he is scrupulous and over-pious.

With this class of people no one's reputation is safe, no friendship is secure, no apology ample. They are always on the alert to hear tales, scandals and rumors, which they rehearse to every one else and scatter broadcast all over the country, and, if any one speaks unkindly of another, though what is said may be very trivial, or in jest, they cannot rest till they have informed the offended party, without explaining the circumstances or allowing the offender any chance of exculpation. Indeed, they not infrequently advance even farther still and employ their tongues in the vilest, most despicable and most abusive kind of calumny and detraction. They handle the double-edge sword of slander with a fiendish skill, that is truly surprising; backbiting, defaming, falsehood and deceit form the most agreeable pastime of their vicious lives.

Says the immortal Shakespeare:

"Good name in man and woman
Is the immediate jewel of their souls."

* * * * *

"Who steals my purse steals trash,
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed."

The low insinuations uttered against a person's character, which everybody will repeat but which nobody will own, are generally born of envy and jealousy and are best answered by taking no notice of them.

To attempt to find the author of a false story is an undertaking which promises no satisfaction; for he who will lie to another will most assuredly lie to save himself.

It is related of St. Philip Neri that, on one occasion a woman who was much given to slander came to him for advice and correction. The saint, with characteristic practicability, bade her go to market, get a chicken that had just been killed, and bring it to him, plucking the feathers as she came along. The woman did as she was directed, and returned, eager to learn the meaning of this strange injunction. "Now," said St. Philip, "retrace your steps, and gather up again, one by one, all the feathers you have scattered and bring them to me." "Alas!" replied the woman, "this I cannot do. I cast the feathers

carelessly away and the wind has carried them in all directions." "Well, my friend," said St. Philip, "so it is with slanders. Like the feathers which have been scattered, they have been wafted in many directions. Call them back now if you can."

These, then, are some of the talkers that fill us with real terror whenever we think of them, and whose company and conversation should be avoided and despised by all. And in which class of these talkers, may I ask, do you recognize your individual selves? Are you a terrible talker, are you a gossip, or, worst of all, are you a malicious talker? Let your own hearts answer. You will never err in speech if five things you observe with care,—of whom you speak, to whom you speak, and how, and when, and where. Besides this, forget not that the first and most important requisite to speak well is to consider beforehand what you have to say. "This lesson is taught us by nature itself, which has so ordered that our ears should be always open and ready to receive every sound, but has wisely placed our lips as a double barrier for the defense of our tongue. By this she teaches us to be forward and ready in hearing, but very moderate and re-

served in speaking;" according to the advice of St. James, "let every one be quick to hear, but slow to speak." The anatomy and structure of the tongue teach us the same thing. It is loose, as you must have observed, at one end and can swing either way, but it is fastened at the other end to the floor of the mouth, and this makes us responsible for the way it wags. It has, moreover, two veins or branches in it, one of which goes to the heart, the source of all our passions, and the other mounts to the brain, the seat of reason, in order to show us that our words should come from the heart and be regulated by reason.* Hence the devout King David, in order that he might be able to discern the proper time both to speak and to be silent, prayed thus: "Place, O Lord, a guard upon my mouth and shut up my lips with a door." And Solomon, the wisest of men, following his royal father's steps, petitioned heaven for the self-same favor in similar words: "Who will give a guard to my mouth and set the seal of prudence upon my lips, that I may never offend by them, nor be ruined by my tongue."

* *Rodriguez—Christian Perfection.*

"St. Cyprian says that as a temperate man does not swallow his meat before he has chewed it well, so a prudent man never utters a word which he has not beforehand nicely weighed in his heart, knowing that rash and inconsiderate language is often the occasion of quarrel and dissension. Another saint advises us to be as long in bringing a word out of our mouths as we are in taking money out of our purse to discharge a debt. How slow and dull we are in opening our purse? How often do we consider whether the debt be due and how much money it comes to? Use the same caution in opening your mouth; consider whether you ought to speak at all, and in what manner, and then you will be sure to overshoot yourself no more in speaking than you would in paying more than is due to your creditors."*

In truth, there are so many circumstances to be observed, so many conditions requisite to speak well, that it would be a wonder not to fail in some of them. For this reason silence is the securest harbor in which we can take shelter. It protects us from all the inconveniences and dan-

* *Rodriguez.*

gers to which our words expose us. "He who is cautious and careful in his words frees his soul from many afflictions," says the wise man. Prov. xxi:23. And an ancient father assures us that wheresoever we live, if we keep silence and are sparing of our words we shall live in peace.

"Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice," was Hamlet's advice to the players. And the old Latin proverb, "Audi multa, loquere pauca," "hear much, but speak little," is an excellent maxim to follow. We all applaud that frequent saying of Arsenius: "I have often repented to have spoken, but never to have held my peace."

"Looking around on the noisy inanity of the world, words with little meaning, actions with little worth, it is refreshing to think on the great empire of silence; the noble, silent men, scattered here and there, each in his own department, silently thinking, silently working, men of whom the daily newspapers never make mention."—*Carlyle*.

They are the strong ones of the earth—those who know how to keep silence when it is a grief to them; who know how to be silent even when they are in the right; who give their own souls time to wax strong against temptation. Silence

is the element in which great things fashion themselves together; and as the deepest life of nature is silent and obscure, so, often, the elements that move and mould society are the results of a sister's counsel and a mother's prayer. Silence is like nightfall—objects are lost in it, insensibly. It is the temple of our purest thoughts; the mirror of our most intimate self-knowledge; the language of eternity. It covers folly; keeps secrets; avoids disputes, and prevents sin.

I.

"So keep a watch on your words,
For words are wonderful things,
They are sweet like the bee's fresh honey,
Like the bees they have terrible stings.

II.

They can bless like the warm, glad sunshine,
And brighten a lonely life;
They can cut in the strife of anger,
Like an open, two-edged knife.

III.

Let them pass through your lips unchallenged
If their errand be true and kind,
If they come to support the weary,
To comfort and help the blind.

IV.

If a bitter, revengeful spirit
Prompts the words, let them be unsaid;
They may flash through a brain like lightning,
Or fall on a heart like lead.

V.

Keep them back, if they're cold and cruel,
Under lock and bar and seal;
The wounds they make, remember,
Are always slow to heal.

VI.

May peace guard your lives,
And ever, from earliest youth,
May the words you daily utter
Be the beautiful words of truth."—*Anon.*

The Catholic Church
And Her Children.

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that resisteth thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn."—Isaias LIV: 17.

"And I say to thee: That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—St. Matt. XVI: 18.

"And other sheep I have that are not of this fold: them also I must bring: and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be made one fold and one shepherd."—St. John X: 16.

"The chief reason why I continued to live so long in the errors of the Manichaeans, and impugned the Catholic Church with so much violence, was because I thought that all I had heard against the Church was true."—St. Augustine.

"When I remember the many doubts and misgivings which I felt when I was a Protestant, and the many fears with which I shrank from joining myself to a system which I had believed to be corrupt and horrible, and when I compare these feelings with the certainty, and peace, and blessedness which I have found since I had grace to make the venture, it seems to me as if the change which I have made can be compared only to the happy death of the just, from which in years gone by they, perhaps, shrank with dread, and hardly dared to look forward to; but to which they forever look back, as to a new birth, into a state blessed beyond all that the heart of man can conceive."—Monsignor G. H. Doane.

VII.

At the time of the American Revolution the total population of this country was three million. Of this number from thirty to forty thousand, or one per cent, was Catholic. To-day the Catholics number ten million one hundred and twenty-nine thousand six hundred and seventy-seven, in a population of sixty-five million, or about one-sixth of the whole number.

In the vast territory owned by the United States in the year 1789 there was one bishop and about thirty priests. To-day there are fourteen archbishops, seventy-seven bishops, eleven thousand six hundred and thirty-six priests, and ten thousand three hundred and thirty-nine churches, where at that date there were only ten.

We have one hundred and seventy-eight colleges and six hundred and sixty-two academies for the higher education of the youth of both sexes. Three thousand eight hundred and eleven parochial schools, two hundred and fifty-one orphan asylums, and eight hundred and twenty-

seven charitable institutions where every form of misery that flesh is heir to is cared for and alleviated.

The sincere and earnest Catholic has every reason to rejoice in the growth of the Church in the United States. It is a growth that he may well be proud of, but it should not surprise him. The progress of his religion can never exceed his ambition, his aspirations, or his belief in the omnipotent power of God to protect and extend "the faith once delivered to the saints."

The Catholic Church in America has arisen as silently as the Temple of Solomon, and it remains for us and for future generations to see that it continues, like that Temple, an evidence of the beauty, and truth, and worship of God in His Church unto the end.

Keeping in mind, then, these encouraging figures, and knowing, as we must, that the circumstances of the times and the developments of the age are directing the attention of all fair-minded men to the standing and progress of the Catholic Church on these shores, let us proceed on our way to gain a few ideas suggestive of what this Church is and what her faithful children should be. In the year 1859, forty-two

years ago, there died in England a man whose name was Thomas Babington Macaulay. He was a brilliant and erudite writer, and, in one of his references to the Catholic Church he pays her the following truthful and beautiful tribute: "There is not and there never was on this earth a work so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church. The history of that Church joins together the two great ages of human civilization. No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the time when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian Amphitheatre. The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday when compared with the long line of the Supreme Pontiffs." (It is said of Macaulay that he had a most extraordinary memory. He could repeat with fluency and ease the longest and most complicated lines of sovereigns and rulers. But he confessed he could never commit to memory the long list of the popes; and so, after several fruitless attempts, he gave up in despair.) "That line we trace back, in an unbroken series, from the Pontiff who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century to the Pontiff who crowned Pepin in the eighth.

The Republic of Venice came next in antiquity. But the Republic of Venice was modern when compared with the papacy; and the Republic of Venice is gone and the papacy remains. The papacy remains, not in decay, not as a mere antique, but full of life and youthful vigor. The Catholic Church is still sending forth to the farthest ends of the world missionaries as zealous as those that landed in Kent with Augustine, and is still confronting hostile kings with the same spirit with which she confronted Attila. Her spiritual ascendancy extends over the vast countries that lie between the plains of Missouri and Cape Horn—countries which a century hence may not improbably contain a population as large as that which now inhabits Europe. Nor do we see any sign that the term of her long dominion is approaching. She saw the commencement of all the governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot on Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca;

and she may still exist in undiminished splendor when some traveler from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's."

"The Catholic Church," I quote from Dr. Brownson, "is no creation of the imagination. She is no mere accident in human history, in Divine Providence, in divine grace, in the conversion of souls. She is a glorious, a living reality. And God, in establishing His Church from the foundation of the world, in giving His life on the Cross for her, in abiding always with her in her tabernacles unto the consummation of time, in denominating her His spouse, His beloved, has taught us how He regards her; how deep and tender, how infinite and inexhaustible is His love for her, and with what love and honor we also should behold her."

To advance arguments in favor of the claims of Catholicity, or dwell at length on any one topic in connection with so extensive a subject, is not my purpose at present. Christ's Church, we know, needs no apology or defense. He Himself has said that it would survive all attacks, and He Himself has likewise promised to be with her all

days, even to the consummation of the world. We are assured beyond the possibility of a doubt that the author of our holy religion is none other than the immutable God Himself, and consequently that her origin is divine; and, this given, her heavenly mission and the truths she teaches are as fixed in our minds as are the eternal truths of geometry. We know, moreover, that our faith is sustained by a logical power and a scriptural proof that cannot be fairly met and confuted. It is sustained by every plain and luminous principle upon which society and government are founded. Our reason, our common sense, the best feelings of our nature, the holiest impulses of our hearts, all satisfy us, beyond the possibility of a doubt that we are in the right. We look back over the pages of past history, and we ascend by a plain, visible and unbroken chain to the apostolic day. We have no chasms to leap, no deserts to cross. At every step in this progress we find the same old Church, the same faith, the same worship still pre-eminent in the Christian world. We behold the rise and fall of empires and sects; but the same old Church always pre-eminent; the records of the past are with us. "Time writes no wrinkles on her azure brow,"

but rather tells for her a glorious story. All along the slumbering ages we meet with myriads of our brethren. The old apostles, the noble and the true, the holy and the just, the despised and persecuted, they, too, are our brethren.

And she, the humblest of the humble, the purest of the pure, "our tainted nature's solitary boast," the stainless mother of our Lord, whom all generations call "Blessed," is revered and loved by us as the noblest of creatures.

We shake hands with the brethren of every kind, and name, and tongue, and join our prayers with those who speak the varied languages of the earth; on every shore, in every land, beneath every sky, and in every city, we meet our brethren of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. We are at home everywhere, and we bow down with the millions who have worshipped and who still worship at the same altar and hold the same faith. Matthew Arnold, a distinguished non-Catholic English critic, speaks thus: "Because of the rich treasures of human life that have been stored within her pale, the man of imagination and the philosopher too will always have a weakness for the Catholic Church. Who, in fact, has

seen the poor in the churches of other denominations as they are seen in our Catholic churches?

The Catholic Church has enveloped human life; and Catholics in general feel themselves to have drawn not only their religion from the Church, but to have drawn from her likewise their art, and poetry, and culture. If there is any one thing especially alien to religion it is divisions. If there is anything especially native to it, it is peace and union. Hence original attraction towards unity in Rome, and hence the great charm and power of man's mind for that unity when once attained. In the Roman Catholic Church of the sixteenth century, when Martin Luther went out from her, this great requisite of Christianity was found, and it is found in the Roman Catholic Church of to-day as well.

I persist, therefore, in thinking that Catholicism has, from this superiority, a great future before it; that it will endure while all the Protestant sects dissolve and perish."

The various sects of Christendom admit, as we all know, that Christ established a Church for the purpose of guarding and transmitting His holy faith. But where is that Church that Christ established as the "pillar and ground of truth?"

Surely it is not the Protestant Episcopal Church, for this dates its commencement only from the sixteenth century, whereas the Church of Christ is coeval with the apostolic age. It is, indeed, pretended that the reformers merely rejected the errors that had been introduced into the Church; but, in this case, it is plain that either St. Paul and Christ Himself were deceived when they pronounced the Church to be the pillar and ground of truth, and unwavering in its faith till the end of time, or the Protestant Church is in error.

Now Protestants, as we all know, are so named because they protested against the so-called errors of the Church of Rome, which, they say, had deviated from the primitive Church,—errors unknown to the first four ages of Christianity.

They admit, therefore,

First, that the true Church must come in right succession from the apostles.

Secondly, that the Roman Catholic Church was in the first ages the true Church.

Thirdly, that the Protestant Church comes directly from the Roman Catholic Church.

If, then, Protestants acknowledge their succession from the Roman Catholic Church, a fact which they cannot deny, they must confess that if

this Church had erred for the space of eleven centuries it could not be the Church of Jesus Christ, and their very succession proves a vitiated origin, and, of course, a false establishment. If, on the contrary, the Roman Catholic Church was the true Church, it could never err, and the reformation of its doctrine was both useless and impious. All Christians, therefore, admit that Jesus Christ established a Church, and that He promised to be with it, guiding it in the way of holiness and truth all days, till the consummation of ages. Consequently, the true Church must be as ancient as Christianity itself.

New establishments cannot pretend to this privilege. If to obtain it they claim succession from another Church, our last word must be this:

The Church you proceed from was either true or false. If true, you were wrong to change her doctrine; if false, you are false yourselves.* Ignorance, bigotry and error cast upon us many a slur. We are frequently called to order for burning candles in the daytime, and they say that the vestments of our ministers are antiquated and out of style. We are often told that we are un-

These arguments are adapted from the "Life of Mrs. E. A. Seaton.

able to cope with modern appliances and the mechanical progress of this go-ahead nineteenth century. But, far from hiding our head like the ostrich in the sand at the approach of these inventions, we hail them as messengers of the Most High, and we use them as Providential instruments for the furtherance of the gospel of truth. If we succeeded so well when we had no ships but frail canoes, no compass but our eyes, when we had no roads but eternal snows, virgin forests, and trackless deserts, and no guides but faith and hope and God—if, even then, we succeeded so well in carrying the gospel of peace to the ends of the earth, how much more can we do now by the aid of the telegraph and the telephone, the steamship and the railroad? And yet changeableness, as all cannot fail to observe, is not a very striking feature of the Catholic Church. She is, and always has been, most persistently conservative. "Absolutely changeless in her moral and doctrinal teaching, which is the same for every age and for every tribe, and tongue, and nation under the broad canopy of heaven, she manifests an almost invincible reluctance to change even in mere matters of discipline and ritual. This reluctance to change has brought upon

the Catholic Church the hatred and contempt of many to whose thinking change and progress are identical notions, convertible terms, precisely similar facts. Nevertheless, supremely regardless of the sneers of some and the aggressive violence of others, old Mother Church calmly pursues the even tenor of her way, making no changes save such as are purely accidental, and making even these not so much to suit the times as to suit her own queenly self. And somehow or other, as even our adversaries must admit, the Catholic Church does seem to get along very well indeed. It is many a long day now since she first began to sail the sea of time, yet her paint is just as bright, and her timbers just as strong as when first the Master launched her nineteen centuries ago. Though not at all a product of this age of steam, she has all the characteristics of the steamship: steadily does she pursue her majestic way, calmly does she hold to the course marked out for her, do others as they list. When the tempest is blowing from ahead she plunges through it; when the billows are too high to mount she stoops a little, while they roll harmlessly over with no more dire result than to clear her decks of the useless litter with which they

are sometimes unavoidably encumbered. And so has she been going on for ages, and so shall she continue to go on until the ages will have ceased to be, an irresistible, immutable type of that immutable Being by Whom she was made, and Who controls her bright and glorious destiny.* What a rich and priceless heritage is the heritage of the genuine Catholic Christian! What a grand and exalted privilege is not the grace of being a child—a faithful child—of the one, only, true and saving faith! But, alas! many a man for a temporal preferment, and many a woman for the sake of an auspicious alliance, yea, for lesser trifles than these, have ungratefully turned their backs on the chaste mother on whose bosom they were nestled. Nor need we advance very far in search for proof of this sad assertion. Perhaps examples lie within the circle of your own acquaintance, nay, perhaps within the limits of your own little parish. I confess that it pains me beyond expression, as it certainly should every loyal child of Mother Church, when I look about me from day to day and see the men and women whose ancestors, if not they,

* *Anon.*

were born and bred in the island of saints, so cold and callous to their own best and truest interests. The Catholic Church, remember, has need of none of us individually. She owes nothing to her children, but her children owe much, and very much, to her. Here and there a disobedient and rebellious child may drop out of her ranks, or, listening to the enticements of vanity or folly, take up other issues. The loss is his. The vacant place will be filled. The ranks will be closed up again, and her good work will continue to go on as of yore. In truth, we must all admit, with the Rev. L. A. Lambert, that "we cannot understand the logic of renouncing the Catholic Church and stopping anywhere short of Atheism, of a denial of the supernatural, or of absolute scepticism. Once start on the inclined plane and there is no logical resting place till the gloomy depths are reached. Before these ultimate results we stand aghast, and shrink, as one shrinks who stands on a bottomless precipice. It is fearful, a dreadful thing, to lose the faith, and those who grow careless and indifferent with regard to it finish by abandoning it altogether; and those who do forsake it never give their real reasons. There is always a dark mystery back of the act,

known only to the unfortunate soul itself, and which the pervert never has the courage to disclose."

We occasionally hear those who throw up the practice of their religion, or, worse, abandon it altogether, allege in justification of their conduct the fact that bickerings and quarrels sometimes occur in the Church. This is true, as it must be of every institution that has a human element in it, and as it always will be as long as man has liberty and ambition and passions. But would you seek the darkness because the sun shines on sinners? If you want to avoid quarrels and bickerings altogether you must search for that lodge in some vast wilderness, for which the poet Cowper longed, where rumor of oppression and deceit might never reach him more." Or go to the moon, or to some other place where human nature is not. This attributing to the Church the delinquencies of men is like attributing to the law the crimes of the law-breaker.—*Id.* Again, we find among this class those who sometimes offer in extenuation of their conduct the treatment of which they have been the object, or the mistakes, perhaps, or even possible fall, of some particular priest. But we

must always remember that our faith does not rest on the standing of any individual priest, and that we should never waver because such or such a one does not happen to come up to our ideal in this or that particular. A priest must work out his salvation just like any other man. He needs help and assistance just as other men do. He must watch and pray, he must bend his knees in confession, he must mortify his passions and bring them into subjection to the spirit just as other men, and just as other men, undoubtedly, must he answer before the great God for his failings, imperfections and falls. "He, like the humblest of his flock, must cling to the Church with the eager grasp of the infant on its mother's breast, knowing that the Church is the appointed source of spiritual life, as the mother is of physical life, and that through her come grace, and truth, and the merits of our blessed Redeemer." —*Id.*

One thing, however, remains gloriously and unquestionably true: You never yet heard of a staunch and genuine Catholic when lying on his bed of death regretting that he lived as such, or asking at death's dark hour to change his belief

for a religion other than that in which he was born and bred. Oh, no—

“When all the blandishments of life are gone,
When tired dissimulation drops her mask,
And real and apparent are the same,”

When eternity with all its mighty consequences rolls up its endless proportions before the dying vision—ah, then no Catholic asks to change his faith. Oh give me the last Sacraments of the Church! Let me die in her holy communion! Let me be buried in consecrated ground! Let my brethren pray for me!

I have said that the Catholic Church needs no apology or defense. The fact that she has withstood for nineteen hundred years persecutions without, and persecutions within, is one of the strongest proofs of her divine origin and supernatural protection. She is the only institution on earth that is impervious to the vicissitudes of time, and that has not been shattered by the iconoclastic hand of man. The Ten cruel and bloody persecutions utterly failed to subdue her. The proud and haughty Caesars fell powerless at her approach. Her enemies in all times have felt in their souls that her origin, her mission and her teaching were divine. “Scoffers and mockers

and false prophets—Pantheists, Materialists and Atheists—all, all the unfortunate children of error may speak and write as they will, but the Roman Catholic Church, one, holy, catholic and apostolic, guided and protected by the spirit of Truth, blessed by the right hand of the God of all power and majesty, remains, and will ever remain, undefiled, unchangeable, and ever victorious. Amidst the changes and crumbling of dynasties, the dismemberment of empires, and the destruction of nations, amidst the crush of matter and the wreck of worlds, her triumphant song of victory has never been hushed; the loud and solemn hymn of her exultant *Te Deum* has never been silenced."* What wins for the Catholic Church more undying laurels throughout this wide, wide land than her homes for the homeless poor, her refuges for the wild and wayward, her asylums for the sick and the maimed, and last, though not, by far, the least, her countless beautiful churches with their heaven-pointed spires? Is there anything in this locality to-day better calculated to advance her interests, is there anything more likely to win for her the wonder and admiration of those who cross these plains, than

* *Conquests of Our Holy Faith—Preface—James J. Treacy.*

this pretty little structure which the zeal and exquisite taste of your devoted pastor, coupled with your generous efforts, have so beautifully adorned? You, then, I have every reason to believe, are loyal Catholic Christians, as true to your faith as the needle to the pole, and ready at all times, I am confident, like the great St. Teresa, to lay down your life for a single ceremony of the Church you love so well. The Catholic who lives in his faith to-day can defy the world. A greater appreciation of, and greater faith in, her work, increased loyalty one to the other, and the consequent extinction of the many petty jealousies and much-accursed narrowness that have made Catholics their own worst foes, will give greater prominence to our Holy Church in this free and glorious land of America. Go not hence then to-day without giving humble thanks to your Father in heaven for the faith that is in you, and every day you live heartily bless Him for the grace of Catholic Christianity. Yes, and ere you leave this edifice for your quiet homes, unite with all the fervor of loving hearts and say with me, if not in word at least in sentiment and thought:

"All hail thou dear and ever blessed Church!

Thou immaculate spouse, thou universal queen, all hail! Highly do we honor thee, for God honors thee; we obey thee, for thou ever commandest the will of thy Lord. The passers-by may jeer thee; the servants of the princes of this world may call thee black; the daughters of the uncircumcised may beat thee; earth and hell rise up in wrath against thee and seek to despoil thee of thy rich ornaments and sully thy fair name; but all the more dear art thou to our hearts; all the more deep the homage we pay thee; and all the more earnestly do we pray thee to own us for thy children and to watch over us, that we may never forfeit the right to call thee our Mother."—*Dr. Brownson.*

“Non Omnis Moriar”

Not all of me shall die.

"Who will grant me that my words may be written? Who will grant me that they may be marked down in a book with an iron pen, and in a plate of lead, or else be graven with an instrument in flint-stone? For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God. Whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another; this, my hope, is laid up in my bosom."—Job XIX: 23-28.

"Martha therefore said to Jesus: Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died. Jesus saith to her: Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith to him: I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus saith to her: I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me although he be dead shall live, and every one that liveth and believeth in me shall not die forever."—St. John XI: 21-27.

"There may be beings, thinking beings, near or surrounding us, which we do not perceive, which we cannot imagine. We know very little; but, in my opinion, we know enough to hope for the immortality, the individual immortality, of the better part of man."—Sir Humphrey Davy.

"Men do not believe in the next world as they do in London or Boston; they do not launch upon the ignotum mare with a shadow of that prophetic belief which girded up the heart of Columbus."—James Russell Lowell.

VIII.

“Non omnis moriar.”

Not all of me shall die.—*Horace.*

Among the questions that were taught us in our childhood, which memory in spite of contrary efforts retains the best, and which oftenest come back to us in after life, are these: “What is man?” “Man is a creature composed of a body and soul and made to the image and likeness of God.”

“In what is the soul like to God?” “The soul is like to God in being a spirit and immortal, and in being capable of knowing and loving Him.”

“What do you mean by saying that the soul is immortal?” “By saying that the soul is immortal I mean that it can never die.”

The Immortality of the Soul, then, is our theme for present consideration, and a most beautiful one it is to be sure. The soul, as we know, is that principle which forms our identity, and by which we live and move and have our being. Our own experience

teaches us that we have intellectual conceptions and operations of reason and judgment independent of our material organs. Our mind grasps what the senses cannot reach. We argue of God and His perfections; we have thoughts of right and justice; we perceive the connection between statements and conclusions; we know the difference between good and evil. Such a principle being independent of matter in its operations, must needs be independent of matter in its existence. It is therefore, by its very nature, beyond the reach of material corruption; its being is not, and cannot, be extinguished with that of the body. It survives its frail tenement of clay, lives on long after the body has crumbled into dust. It must, therefore, be immortal.

The first great proof that we have of the immortality of the soul is drawn from the intrinsic nature of the soul itself, which is so constituted that dissolution, as applied to it, is, at least physically speaking, an impossibility.

Who is there, in fact of right reason and sane mind, that feels not a repugnance for death? We shudder and recoil at the very notion of annihilation. There is within us a still small voice which tells us that this present life is not the end of

all, but that there is another and a better world beyond the grave where the good shall live on in bliss forever.

While there are a thousand reasons to prove the life hereafter, there is not a single one which proves that death ends all for us. "If we wholly perish with the body, if the soul is extinguished at the moment of death, whence then proceeds that desire of happiness which continually haunts us? All our passions here below may be easily gratified; love, ambition, anger have their full measure of enjoyment; the desire of happiness is the only one that cannot be satisfied and that fails even of an object, as we know not what that felicity is which we long for."—*Genius of Christianity*. As one instance of this I will quote for you the words of one of the greatest musicians of modern times, the celebrated pianist, Herman. He was a Jew by birth, but became a Catholic, and in the year 1849 entered the Carmelite order, where he was known as Father Augustine of the Blessed Sacrament. He died in the year 1871, of small-pox, contracted while nursing some of the French prisoners in the Franco-Prussian war. "Happiness," says he, "how I have sought it! To find it I have traversed kingdoms and fur-

crowded seas. I have sought it in the poetic nights of an enchanting climate, on the limpid waters of Helvetian lakes; among the jagged peaks of lofty mountains, amid the grandest spectacles of nature. I have sought it in the refined society of drawing-rooms, in sumptuous feasts, in the giddy round of balls, and festive entertainments. I have sought it in the possession of gold, the excitement of plays, the gems of literature and in a life of adventure. I have sought it in artistic fame, in the intimacy of celebrated men, in every pleasure of mind and of sense. Alas! where have I not sought for happiness, and I found it not, but in Thee, O my God!"

"Our hearts, O Lord, were made for Thee,
And restless must they be
Until, O Lord,—this grace accord—
Until they rest in Thee."—*St. Augustin.*

We all remember the verdict of Solomon, the wisest of men. Rich and powerful, and of unbounded fame, he gave himself without reserve to the enjoyment of every pleasure. "I made me," he says, "great works. I built me houses and planted vineyards, and whatever my eyes desired I refused them not; and I saw in all things vanity and vexation of spirit and that nothing

was lasting under the sun. Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity!" was the verdict uttered in the bitterness of his heart.

It is the same with all who have had the opportunity of putting it to the test. At a distance things look so delightful, so enticing and so desirable—but they are delusive. Like the apples that grow on the borders of the Dead Sea they are beautiful to behold, but when we touch them they burst and leave nothing but ashes in our hand. Look at Napoleon the First. After several amazing campaigns, after conquering country after country, and laying a good part of Europe under his feet, was he satisfied? No. His successes merely whetted his appetite for other conquests; so that in his insatiable ambition, trying to extend his power still further he lost all and died an exile and a prisoner on the bleak and rock-ribbed island of St. Helena.

Alexander the Great is another example; for when he had conquered the entire known world, so far from being satisfied, he wept. Why? Because there were no more worlds to conquer. "Anthony," says a learned writer, "sought for happiness in love; Brutus in glory, Caesar in dominion. The first found disgrace; the second dis-

gust, the last ingratitude, and each destruction;" and so of all. In this world the heart is never at rest. Desires, longings and aspirations after the things that are not are always distracting, and disturbing, and vexing it.

If, as we all must admit, it is impossible to deny that man cherishes hopes to the very tomb, if it is certain that all earthly possessions, so far from satiating our desires serve only to increase the void in the soul, we cannot but conclude that there must be a something beyond the limits of time. If God, who does nothing in vain but always acts wisely and well, has conferred upon us faculties and capacities that can never be satisfied nor fully exercised on the stage of this world, they must be destined for another sphere—for a life beyond the tomb.

One other proof of the Immortality of the Soul, and one of the clearest witnesses to a future life, is found in that strange phenomenon which we call conscience. In fact, there is scarcely anything so awfully strange and so essentially characteristic of man as this self-same phenomenon. What then is conscience? How shall we define it? "Conscience is that low, still, soft, inarticulate voice speaking so clearly and distinctly with-

in our inmost being, and instructing us as to the moral worth of conduct. It is a judge which we cannot dislodge, seated upon the throne of our hearts, and pronouncing sentence upon every act we perform, and upon every duty we fulfill or refuse to fulfill. We cannot control it, we cannot bribe it, we cannot silence it. Though we may oppose and resist it, and petulantly disobey its injunctions, it still continues to denounce and condemn our evil conduct. 'This,' it says, 'is right, that is wrong. This is commanded, that is forbidden.' Conscience makes cowards of us all. A man cannot steal but it accuses him; a man cannot swear but it checks him; a man cannot do a base act but it detects him. Whence comes this strange monitor? Who has stationed this secret sentinel at the door of our hearts? No other, surely, than the Author of our Being; and to what purpose, unless He intends to reward obedience and punish disobedience—not here, for we see that in this world the wicked often prosper, and the good are oppressed—then, if not here it must be hereafter."—*Life After Death*. Yes, each and every individual has within his own heart a tribunal, where he sits in judgment on himself, till the Supreme Arbiter

shall confirm the sentence. If vice is but a physical consequence of our organization, whence then arises the dread that embitters the days of prosperous guilt? Holy Scripture assures us, and experience betters the instruction, that "there is no peace for the wicked." "The wicked man fleeth when no man pursueth." "The sound of dread is always in his ears," and "when there is peace he always suspecteth treason."

"It must be so,—Plato, thou reasonest well!—
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,
Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man."—*Addison*.

“Non Omnis Moriar”

Not all of me shall die.

IX.

Before passing on to our next argument for the Immortality of the Soul let me call your attention to some startling facts which, doubtless, have more than once worried your minds, and which at the same time present us with one of the strongest proofs of a life hereafter.

All men, all peoples, all tribes and all tongues have always believed in some kind of an hereafter, some future state, where the soul will live on forever, in reward or punishment for the actions of time. Go where we will, and seek where we will and as far back as we will, we shall invariably find that men have always uniformly believed in a state of existence after death. This conviction is so strong, and so universal, that we can only conclude that it is ingrained in man's very nature. Though some few individuals may question it, though an isolated person here and there may court notoriety by denying it, the broad fact remains that the voice of mankind proclaims it, and has ever proclaimed it, in most unmistakable terms.

Now, no large number of people can ever be brought to believe in any doctrine which is contrary to right reason, or to their own ease and happiness in this world. This universal belief in the Immortality of the Soul, and in a future state of existence, is the unbiased reason of man speaking with certainty on a subject of the very highest importance to each and every member of the human race. It must, therefore, be true and certain; for human reason cannot be deceived on such an important matter, given to us and created in us as it is, for the guidance of our actions, by the God of nature.

Although the writings of some of the ancient philosophers and learned men of antiquity represent a vague uncertainty with regard to the Immortality of the Soul, still, to the credit of not a few of the sages of the olden times, and of Greece and Rome especially, it must be said that they conceived a more just and exalted idea of human nature. When they viewed with complacency the extent of their own mental powers, when they exercised the various faculties of memory, of fancy and of judgment, in the most profound speculations, or the most important labors, which transported them into future ages

far beyond the bounds of death and the grave, they were unwilling to confound themselves with the beasts of the field, or to suppose that a being for whose dignity they entertained the most sincere admiration could be limited to a spot of earth, or to a few years of duration. With this favorable conviction they summoned to their aid the science of metaphysics, by which they soon discovered that, as none of the properties of matter will apply to the operations of the mind, the human soul must, consequently, be a substance distinct from the body—pure, simple, and spiritual, incapable of dissolution and susceptible of a much higher degree of virtue and happiness after its release from its corporeal prison.

One of the finest, if not the very finest, of passages in all the heathen authors, is that which is found in the Roman orator Cicero's treatise on "Old Age," wherein he manifests his belief in the Immortality of the Soul, and in the recognition and reunion of friends after death. It is as follows:

"O glorious day, when I shall go to that divine assembly and company of spirits, and when I shall depart out of this bustle, this sink of corruption! For I shall go, not only to those great

men of whom I have before spoken, but also to my dear Cato (his son), than whom there never was a better man, or one more excellent in filial affection; whose funeral rites were performed by me when the contrary was natural, namely, that mine should be performed by him. His soul, not desiring, but looking back on me, has departed into those regions where he saw that I myself must come; and I seem to bear firmly my affliction, not because I did not grieve for it, but because I comforted myself, thinking that the separation and parting between us would not be of long duration."

This passage, written more than one hundred years before the Christian era, is, as I have said, one of the finest, if not the very finest, in all the heathen authors; and well it may, for the sentiments it expresses awaken a responsive echo in every human heart.

Edmund Burke, by far the most philosophical and imaginative of England's statesmen, who admits that he modeled his character in eloquence, policy, and ethics on the great Roman orator, has likewise given expression to similar thoughts in that very pathetic account which he has left us of the untimely calling away of his dear son.

He says: "I live in an inverted order. They who ought to have succeeded me are gone before me; they who should have been to me as posterity are in the place of ancestors. I owe to the dearest relation—which ever must subsist in memory—that act of piety which he would have performed to me. But a Disposer Whose power we are little liable to resist, and Whose wisdom it behooves us not at all to dispute, has ordained it in another manner, and—whatever my querulous weakness might suggest—a far better."

We are certain that morality is the foundation of all society; but if man is only a bag of bones, a mere mass of matter, there is in reality neither vice nor virtue, and, of course, morality is a mere sham. Our laws, which are ever relative and variable, cannot serve as the support of morals which are absolute and unalterable; they must, therefore, rest on something more permanent than the present life and have better guarantees than uncertain rewards and transient punishments. But there is yet another and a stronger proof than all to assure us, beyond the possibility of a doubt, of the Immortality of the Soul, and of the unending duration of the life hereafter. God Himself has spoken. He

who has said "heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall never pass away," declares it to be so, and who shall dare to question or deny the truth of His utterances!

"Ego sum resurrectio et vita: qui credit in me, etiam si mortuus fuerit, vivet: et omnis, qui vivit, et credit in me, non morietur in aeternum."—Jno. xi.

As far back as Genesis, the first book of the Bible, a clear distinction is drawn between the body of man and his soul. "God formed man of the slime of the earth (this refers to the body), and breathed into his face the breath of life, and he became a living soul," which signifies his spiritual and nobler part. Farther on in this same book we read that the patriarch Jacob, on being asked by King Pharo, "How many are the days of the years of thy life?" replied, "The days of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty, few and evil, and they are not come up to the days of the pilgrimage of my fathers." Gen. xlvii:9. Now, it would be meaningless to speak of this life as a "pilgrimage" unless it were thought to lead somewhere; unless, in a word, it were the high road to some other form of existence. Again, the old Hebrews were accustomed to speak of

their dead as being "gathered to their fathers" or "united to their people," which certainly does not convey the idea of annihilation. In the book of Ecclesiastes xii:5 we are told that "man shall go into the house of his eternity," and that "the dust shall return into its earth, from whence it was, and the spirit return to God Who gave it." "And all things that are done," continues the same writer, "God will bring into judgment for every error, whether it be good or evil."

"The souls of the just," says the Book of Wisdom, "are in the hands of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure was taken for misery;—but they are in peace, and their hope is full of immortality."—Wisdom iii:14.*

Long centuries ago holy Job, that unequaled model of perfect patience and resignation, borne up by the hope of immortality, and looking down through the vista of futurity, burst forth into those admirable and consoling words, which have ever since been the hope and stay of all succeeding generations: "I know that my Redeemer

* Life After Death.

liveth, and that on the last day I shall rise out of the earth and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God. This my hope is laid up in my bosom." This beautiful prophecy of the holy patriarch is amply confirmed by the words of our Blessed Redeemer—"All who are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they who have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life, but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment.

The body, says St. Paul, is sown in corruption, it shall rise in power; it is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body. For this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality.—I Cor. xv.

Every one, says the gospel of St. Matthew, that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or lands for My name's sake shall receive an hundred fold and shall possess life everlasting.—xix:29. Therefore a future and everlasting life exists. Again, the same evangelist informs us that Christ will judge the good and the wicked at the last day, and these, he says, "shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into everlasting glory." When our Blessed Lord was asked by a certain ruler: "Master,

what shall I do to possess eternal life," the Savior of the world did not deny a future existence, but told him how to merit it. And so I might go on, almost indefinitely, multiplying texts to show how unmistakably the doctrine of a future life is insisted upon and reiterated in the inspired writings. The Church, which is the "pillar and ground of truth," has accepted these passages in their natural and literal interpretation, and never ceases to remind us of the endless joys of heaven on the one hand, and the interminable pains of hell on the other. Her teaching is, and always has been, and always will be, in strict accordance with reason and sound sense, and is strongly enforced and strengthened by every appeal to history or science. "In fact, this dogma of the Immortality of the Soul is so bound up with religion, so woven into the whole fabric of human thought, motive and sympathy, that its destruction would mean the destruction of our best-founded and most deeply-rooted convictions. As you cannot remove the mainspring of a musical box without arresting every musical sound, and as you cannot destroy the foundation of a house without bringing the whole building down upon your ears, so you cannot give up faith in a future

life without at the same time renouncing faith in all else that is worth believing. No, if there be no future life then there is no justice in God; and if God is not just then He is not God, and there is no such Being at all in existence. Furthermore, if there be no future life the words of Christ are false, the Incarnation is a fraud, the Sacraments are the silly inventions of men, the Church and its marvellous duration, unity, holiness, and catholicity are without any adequate explanation, and the only wise are they who make the most of this world, who live for pleasures, enjoyment, the pampering of their flesh, and the indulgence of their lusts. Once believe the grewsome doctrine of annihilation, once deny a future life, and suicide will become the most rational and sensible course. Why, in fact, should any man live one hour longer than he desires if there be nothing to follow after death? Why should he endure pain, and sorrow, and toil, and weariness, and poverty, and want, and disease, and all the rest, when he can escape them forever in the corruption of the grave? When there is nothing left to live for, when the orange of life has been sucked to the last drop, then reason might justly countenance self-destruction,

and court the total oblivion that death would be supposed to bring. To deny immortality is to turn sceptic, and to cast off all that is best, and greatest and noblest in human life. It is to confess that man is not only no better than the beast, but infinitely worse. "If in this life only," writes the great St. Paul, "we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable." And well might it be added that we should be more miserable not merely than all men, but more miserable even than all beasts, for they, at least, are incapable of realizing what death is, and have no kind of knowledge of the extinction that awaits them.

Their natural and earthly happiness is not disturbed by the prickings of an uneasy conscience; they are not harassed by the gloomy forebodings of a future judgment; they have no experience of the anxieties, and cares, and responsibilities of human life, nor do they even suspect the thousand and one sources of affliction, disappointment and sorrow which spread their stinging waters like an inundation over the human heart, till often it would fain break and beat no more. No, the dogma of the Immortality of the Soul rests upon too many and too solid arguments to

be called in question, and must needs be accepted by all reasonable and prudent men. From the Latin bard who sang "Non omnis moriar," "Not all of me shall die," to the plaintive note of the late poet laureate:

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is.—*Tennyson.*

All noble minds have turned at times to that momentous question, and tried to pierce the impenetrable gloom that crowds us round and makes of life but a dreary vale between the undiscovered peaks of two eternities. Revelation confirms the conclusion reached by Reason, Conscience adds its sanction to both, and, under their influence, grim death itself becomes a blessed consummation.* Oh, what a beautiful and consoling belief is not the belief of the Immortality of the Soul! In youth, in health, in prosperity, it awakens feelings of gratitude and sublime love, and purifies at the same time that it exalts. But it is in misfortune, in sickness, and above all, when we are gliding into the solitary haven of old

* Life After Death.

age, that its effects are most truly and beneficially felt. What a halo of holy peace it throws around the memories of those from whom death has separated us for a time! What a blessed influence it wields over the life of the good and fervent Catholic, through all the days, till the dawn of that happy one that breaks the chain and calls from exile home!

How cruel and hard-hearted are they who, by raising doubts of an hereafter, would deprive us of the best and fondest aspirations of our nature. The realization that life is gliding swiftly away, and that death is ever hurrying on apace is painful, it is true, and to some terrible; but, to lie down and die, and be no more forever! Time never was when man wished for such an end, nor has the man ever lived that did not in his heart promise himself something better. Reason, revelation, conscience, the monuments of the nations, the best and holiest impulses of our nature, are all protests against nothingness after death. Miserable, and to be pitied, indeed, are they who have no faith. Without faith there can be no hope, and without hope what is life but a gloomy storehouse of disquieting mysteries! What is death but an insolvable riddle!

Oh, blessed and praised for evermore be God,
Who has given us to see that old, old belief of
Immortality; and may He and His ever blessed
mother, and all the dear ones who have gone be-
fore us with the light of faith and hope, stand by
us, to aid us to see it, in all its blissful reality,
when the dark shadows of the grave are gather-
ing round us, and the grim angel of death bears
us onward to the ocean!

The Cross.

"And going out they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon: him they forced to take up his cross."—Matt. XXVII: 32.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."—St. Matt. XVI: 24.

"He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—Phil. II: 8.

"All crosses become light when I consider the reward that I expect."—St. Francis of Assisi.

RABBONI.

*"When I am dying, how glad I shall be
That the lamp of my life has been burned out
for Thee.
That sorrow has darkened the path that I trod;
That thorns, and not roses, were strewn o'er the
sod;
That anguish of spirit full often was mine,
Since anguish of spirit so often was thine.
My cherished Rabboni, how glad I shall be
To die with a hope of a welcome from Thee."*

The above lines, I have been told, were found on the desk of a saintly Jesuit father, who died some years ago in New York. It is supposed that he penned them himself shortly before his demise.

X.

“O Cross, our one reliance, hail!
This Holy Passiontide avail
To give fresh merit to the saint,
And pardon to the penitent.”

This is the last stanza but one of a hymn which the priests of the Church read in their office of these last days of Lent.

“From time immemorial nations have had some cherished standard around which their fondest hopes have clustered, whether in the days of their prosperity or adversity. Patriotic eyes have ever regarded their national emblems as beings endowed with life, infused by the “God of Armies,” and often, indeed, as in the days of pagan Rome, have these same emblems been looked upon as the tutelary deities of the commonwealth itself. In times of peace they were enshrouded amid all the pomp and splendor that the extravagance of a superstitious people could suggest. Gold and precious stones were displayed in adorning their sacred precincts, burning incense arose in clouds

from their altars, while hymns of joy and gladness announced their appearance among their devoted followers.

The Roman soldier, as he gazed upon the flag of his country, beheld therein the constituent element of his own greatness, and his heart and hand were nerved with Herculean strength to meet the foe. In the eagles which floated amid the din of battle he read the history of his empire—her conquests, riches, and power—and cheerfully did he give his life for the ideas this evoked. The Saracen, as he marched forth to battle, beheld the crescent of his prophet, and was ready and willing to die for his cause. As the crescent waves before him his imagination pictures the prophet beckoning him on to victory or to death; his courage rises, his blood boils, and his cimeter leaps from his scabbard. No danger daunts, no privation deters him, so long as he beholds the emblem of his religion and his race.

Napoleon the First, with his battalions, traversed the continent of Europe dictating terms to kings and emperors, and, finally, marshalled his victorious forces around the pyramids of Egypt. During this triumphant march his most potent auxiliaries were the eagles of France, draped in

their tri-colored plumage. At the bridge of Lodi, when the French hosts shrank back appalled from the carnage caused by the terrific fire of the Austrians, Napoleon raised aloft the emblem of France before the eyes of his panic-stricken veterans. "Conquerors of Lodi," said he, "follow your general." In an instant every heart was nerved, and amidst the storms of balls and the shrieks of the wounded and dying the bridge was carried and the day was won. In the midst of the deadly snows of Russia, the burning sands of Egypt, or the towering summits of the Alps, the great talisman which paved the way for victory and gave inspiration to his legions was the national symbol of bonny France. How often has the tide of battle been turned in favor of England by raising her symbol, and the war cry "St. George and the Dragon," in the thickest of the fray? Yes, and how often, too, in the brunt of battle and slaughter, has the drooping spirit of the Celt been roused to fierce enthusiasm and quick determination at sight of the verdant emblem of his own loved isle of the ocean—the dear little shamrock.

What true American can look upon the flag of his country without emotion, love and venera-

tion? Whether he beholds it draped in ornament, tattered by the hand of the foe, waving to the breeze, or unfurled upon the battlefield or the ocean, he reads in every star and every stripe the history of his native land: of her past struggles, her present glorious renown, and her future foremost rank among the nations of the earth. Under its shadow the soldier is a braver man, the statesman a better patriot, the citizen a truer loyalist, and the American tourist abroad prouder of his country and his home. Even at the present day a feeling akin to that which fired the breast of ancient warriors comes over the modern soldier when he beholds the flag of his country unfurled amid the din of battle. It tells him of his duty as a man; it makes him forget the dangers of the fight by filling him with thoughts of victory.

Even the most indifferent cannot look upon the flag of his country without a sensation of patriotic pride and honor. What a thrill of joy rushes through the bosom of the wanderer when he beholds in foreign climes the floating emblem that speaks to him of home and its cherished connections!

Whether emblazoned with the stars and stripes

of the Union, the harp and sunburst of Ireland, or the eagles of France and Prussia, provided it be the standard of the land that gave him birth he hails it with a filial enthusiasm that would prompt him to place it, were he able, on every citadel in the world.

Is it any wonder, then, that the standard of Christianity—the cross—should be loved and revered by so many millions who claim it as their own? It is the standard of a people who are not confined to any nation on the globe; it is the ensign of a power more formidable than that of the Caesars, and reminds us of a kingdom more lasting than the world itself. It speaks to the hearts of its children in tones of love more powerful than the threats of tyrants, and nerves them, when needs be, to deeds more heroic than ever graced the annals of pagan Rome or Sparta. Once the degraded instrument of punishment of slaves and men unworthy to be Romans, it beholds its destiny changed and sanctified by the embrace of a God Himself. It towers above the "Roman Eagles" on the Banner of Constantine, and leads the way to victories more lasting than the empire itself. It is carried by the followers of the crucified King into countries the most re-

mote; it is planted on shores the most unknown; and towers in imposing grandeur where the Roman Eagles never penetrated. It adorns the crowns of kings and emperors; it glitters in the coronets of dukes and princes; it shines on the breasts of military heroes whom a grateful country would honor for their valor and loyalty to the State; it caps the fairest monuments of departed greatness, and rears itself aloft above the spires and domes of our churches and cathedrals. It is loved and cherished by the lowly as well as by the great; it is found in the cottage of the peasant, as well as in the palace of the prince; it cheers the humble tiller of the soil as well as the general who braves the storm of battle. No matter to what condition of life its children may belong it brings them, in adversity and in prosperity, the happy reward of peace and resignation. The dying pauper who has followed it through life may hail it from afar, or grasp it in his trembling hands, confident of victory at last. The Christian general who falls in the cause of God may gaze with hopeful eyes upon the cross hilt of his broken weapon and call upon the God of armies to show him mercy."*

**Extract from an article read and committed to memory many years ago.*

Yes, ever since the date of the sorrowful event enacted on Calvary's Mount the cross, with the image of our Blessed Lord attached thereto, has been universally recognized as the chief symbol of Christianity. In the days of the apostles and their immediate successors it was their ever present memento, friend, solace, badge, and emblem of faith. When the early Christians were hunted down like wild beasts and driven by the sanguinary pagans into the most secret recesses of the earth to escape martyrdom, the holy cross ever accompanied them, symbolized their faith, and served as a beacon light and a rallying point for the persecuted followers of Jesus.

Behold Christopher Columbus, discoverer of the new world and devoted Catholic that he was, planting the cross on the island of San Salvador! See the humble but illustrious Jesuit missionary, Father Marquette, the discoverer and explorer of the "Father of Waters," the Mississippi, sailing down that noble stream the crucifix girded on his breast; or the saintly Father Jogues, carving the sacred symbol of man's redemption on the lofty pines of the virgin forests of New York!

Whenever the missionaries of the Catholic Church have abandoned country, home and

friends, and penetrated into the remotest wilds of the savage in order to preach the gospel to every creature, the holy cross with its divine associations always led the way—beckoning them on in their great life work of love and mercy. Often have these devoted and self-sacrificing men, like the courageous Father Damien, the leper priest of our own times, met the martyr's fate; but they died in holy triumph, with smiles and prayers on their lips, their eyes fixed on the sacred cross and their souls on heaven.

If a nation's flag has been able to stir the soul of the soldier to deeds of noble daring amid the rush of battle, the cross of Christ has been able not less often to fire the spirit of the lone missionary with burning love and zeal in the midst of an unbroken wilderness.

If with flag in hand the soldier has rushed to the mouth of the cannon, and laid down his life to win a battle, no less frequently has the humble follower of St. Ignatius, St. Francis, or St. Dominic, holding aloft the thrice and ever blessed cross, rushed to the desert places of the earth, where famine, pestilence and bleeding death encompassed them on every side.

Look at Ireland! Though her enemies have

swarmed round her for centuries, and sorrow, famine and slow persecution have multiplied their rigors, yet that cross which rules men and ages, and braves all tyranny, has ever remained standing. The brutal Henry VIII could not lower it, the wicked Elizabeth could not uproot it, nor the cruel hand of Cromwell tear it from the bosom of Green Erin. If the Sister of Charity or Mercy is enabled to wear a smile in the discharge of her arduous, and sometimes repulsive, duties, it is because the crucifix nailed by her bed beams upon her with love and compassion; because the likeness of her Master sanctifies and hallows the symbol under which she labors. Wherever a Catholic church exists to-day, whether in the gay and crowded cities of London, Paris, Dublin or Vienna of the old world; New York, Chicago, Boston or Philadelphia in the new; in village, town or hamlet; on the pathless prairies of the West, the trackless wilds of Africa, or the pampas of South America; by the banks of the lordly Hudson, or the shores of the sweet Pacific; on the plains of Nova Scotia, or in the isles of the Southern sea; from turret, steeple, or dome, heavenward looms the cross! Is there not, likewise, something truly significant

and sublimely religious in Catholics always placing the cross above the last resting place of their dear departed?—a glorious assertion that those who slumber beneath its silent shade in death had, when living, placed their hope and trust in Him who poured out His life's blood upon that sacred sign for their eternal salvation. And it is certainly a most encouraging indication of the times to note that the cross, which less than fifty years ago was exclusively a Catholic symbol, is gradually winning its way everywhere, and that there are now found but few who dare oppose it. In Catholic countries you meet the cross at every turn; along the public highway, in the paths across the fields, in the shady woods, on lonely hilltops and down in the secluded valleys, the faith and love of better times have erected this sign of our Redemption in order that the weary pilgrim on his way through life, by merely casting a look of confidence on this emblem of salvation may be comforted and strengthened, and with renewed courage may push vigorously on to the eternal resting place at the end of his pilgrimage. See, too, how closely the cross is interwoven with everything connected with the sanctuary, and particularly with the ministrations

of the priest at the altar. It is worked in films of silk and gold upon every vestment but one that he dons for the celebration of the Adorable Sacrifice. It is stamped upon the chalice, the paten, the pall, the corporal, the purificator, and even upon the host, which is to be changed into the Body of Christ. It was in the form of a cross that the life-giving waters were poured upon your infant heads in holy Baptism; that your brows were anointed in Confirmation; that you are now, in the full-grown years of manhood and womanhood, dismissed from the sacred tribunal with the benign and consoling assurance that your sins are forgiven you, and that you are signed before the thrice blessed Body of the Savior rests upon your tongue in Holy Communion. Yes, and it is, finally, with this sacred sign that God's anointed will close your dying eyes, seal your dying lips, and bid you go forth to meet your eternal doom. And why should it be otherwise? Is there any other sign in which we can hope to conquer? Does it behoove us, as the apostle says, "to glory in aught save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which is our salvation, our life and our resurrection?" Is not the cross the standard and the hope of Chris-

tians? Is there a nation, is there a family, is there an individual that does not show some reverence for the things of the past? Is not the lock of hair, the photograph of some dear one passed away, the last memento of severed love, kissed and pressed to the bosom? No gold could purchase the faded pictures that hang in the ancestral halls of our mediaeval castles. Far away in our antipodes some poor Irish exile will reverently enclose between the well-thumbed leaves of his favorite book a blossom from the hawthorn that grew near his cabin door.

Boleslaus, King of Poland, wore around his neck a golden medal with the features of his father stamped upon it. When about to engage in any important work he would take the medal in his hand, gaze upon it with tearful eyes, and say, "O dearly beloved father, may I never do anything unworthy of thy royal name!" Thus by means of a medal did this king endeavor to remember the blessings and example of his father. If statesmen, philosophers, warriors, and citizens of all classes love and revere their symbols because of the events and circumstances they recall, why should not the true Christian likewise love and respect the hallowed symbol which

brings before him the facts and incidents connected with the passion and crucifixion of his Savior?

And is this universal respect which nations have for their symbols, and which all classes of people manifest for the mementoes of the past, to be cried down as superstitious and sinful when applied to the sacred cross? There are men who will scoff at the devotion and veneration of the Catholic for the emblem of his Redemption and who will pay large sums of money for a broken faun, or a coin covered with verdigris. Our separated brethren might perhaps be less inclined to carp at us, and better able to understand how natural it is for the Catholic to venerate sacred relics, and to hold in deep esteem and love the sacred cross, did they recall more frequently to mind the enthusiastic admiration and veneration that sometimes manifest themselves among the populace on the demise of some great man. Especially was this noticed in the case of Gen. U. S. Grant. Those who could secure twigs from trees growing near the hero's tomb, a pinch of earth, a flower even, esteemed themselves eminently and incomparably happy. Yes, one enthusiast did not hesitate to offer the embalmer

a large sum of money for a lock of the silent chieftain's hair. How absurd the idea that it is the material of the flag, or of the cross, which calls forth these powerful emotions, these high resolutions! How false and delusive the supposition that idolatry can spring from the contemplation and reverence of objects which place before the mind's eye, in the form of symbols, the important events of a nation or the sufferings and death of a God!

Let no one, we insist, question the motives or the propriety of his fellow man who bows down in tears, in love, in gratitude and devotion before the recognized emblems of great nations and Godlike achievements. Such, then, is the cross—the standard of the Christian. And how do you regard it? Do you love it? Do you revere it? Does it occupy the warmest spot in your heart's affections, the best place in your home adornments? If you were to be summoned hence to-night would the crucifix bring up before your dying vision strange or familiar thoughts?

What sentiments does the cross, pointing skyward from the spire of your pretty little church, bring home to your minds when you view it from

afar? Is it to you a meaningless symbol, conveying no higher truth, speaking in no louder terms to your hearts, than the flag pole on the city hall or the weather vane on a Methodist meeting-house? When St. Thomas Aquinas, the celebrated theologian and Angelic Doctor, and one of the greatest minds that ever lived, was asked where he acquired his immense and wonderful knowledge, he took his inquisitor to his humble cell and pointed to the crucifix. Should not the mute reply of this distinguished saint teach us also a lesson, even though our lines be not cast in the deep springs of science and learning?

But bear in mind that He who sanctified the banner of the cross, and raised it to that degree of glory which it has so universally attained, has likewise given expression to two very significant sentences: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." And again: "He that taketh not up his cross and followeth me is not worthy of me." Regard the great symbol of Christianity as we will, here, at least, is the course marked out for us all, the badge that will testify to our enrollment among the disciples of the Savior. "Go no

other way," says St. Augustine, "but that by which Christ went; the way seems hard, but it is safe." Now the way that Christ went, and the way that all his saints have gone, was the narrow, rugged, thorny, but royal road of the Holy Cross, and there is no other path to life, and to true interior peace, but the same ever blessed way of the Holy Cross and of daily mortification. "Go where we will, seek what we will, and we shall not find a higher way above, nor a safer way below, than the way of the Holy Cross. Dispose and order all things in a manner best calculated to succeed, and in fittest consonance with our most sanguine expectations, and we shall still find something to suffer, either willingly or unwillingly; and so we shall always find the cross; for either we shall feel pain in the body, or sustain in the soul tribulation of spirit. Sometimes it will seem as though God Himself has abandoned us, at other times we will be afflicted by our neighbor, and, what is more, we will often be a trouble and an annoyance to ourselves."—*Imitation of Christ*. B. ii:c. 12.

The cross, therefore, is always ready, and everywhere awaits us. In fact this whole mortal life is full of miseries and everywhere marked

with crosses; and so, indeed, will it be with us wherever we are, and so indeed will we find it wherever we go. You have your cross, I have mine. Suffering and trials are incident to mortality; and nothing is more acceptable to God, nothing more salutary to ourselves, than to bear them willingly for the Savior's sake. Our Divine Redeemer is the spiritual King of our souls, and it is by the love and spirit of His cross that He must reign therein. By this happy instrument He has rescued us from the power of sin and delivered us from death and hell.

Let us gladly, therefore, take up our cross and follow Jesus. "He has gone before us carrying His cross. He died for us upon the Cross, and if we are His companions in suffering we shall also be His companions in glory."

Indeed, had there been anything better and more beneficial to man's salvation than suffering Christ certainly would have shown it by word and example; for He manifestly exhorts both His disciples who followed Him, and all who desire to follow Him, to bear the cross, saying: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." "He that tak-

eth not up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me."—*Id.*

"Seek not to drop the cross you wear,
Or lay it down; for if you do
Another shall be built for you
More difficult and hard to bear.

The cross is always made to fit
The back which bears it. Be content,
Accept the burden which was sent
And strive to make the best of it.

Think not how heavy is your load;
Think not how rough the road or long;
Look up and say: 'Lord, I am strong,
And love makes beautiful the road.'

Who toils in faith and knows not fear
Shall live to find his cross, some day,
Supported all along the way
By angels who are walking near."

—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox.*

I leave off, therefore, as I began, and I say
for you and for me, in the sweet words of the
hymn "Vexilla Regis,"

"O Cross, our one reliance, hail!
This Holy Passiontide avail
To give fresh merit to the saint,
And pardon to the penitent."

Perseverance.

"One thing have I asked of the Lord, this I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life."—Ps. XXVI: 4.

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."—Jer. VIII: 20.

"And you shall be hated by all men for my name's sake; but he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved."—St. Matt. X: 22.

"Every noble work is at first impossible."—Carlyle.

"A falling drop at last will cave a stone."—Lucretius.

"No rock so hard but that a little wave may beat admission in a thousand years."—Tennyson.

"I argue not against heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer right onward."—Milton.

XI.

When Michael Angelo, one of the greatest artists that ever lived, was asked why he did not marry, he replied: "Painting is my wife and my works are my children." On another occasion, while busily at work on a celebrated painting, a person who had studiously watched him for some time asked him why he took such exceeding pains, giving it a little touch in this place, and a slight brush in that, a faint stroke here, and a deeper tinge there; these, after all, are only trifles. Yes, replied the artist, they are only trifles, it is true, but trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle. Michael Angelo touched and retouched the canvas till its figures all but spoke; and thus he became a master artist. Had he laid aside the easel and the brush after his first production he would never have arrived at the degree of excellence which he subsequently attained; neither would his name have come down to us as worthy of imitation, nor his works as worthy of our admiration and study. But, be-

cause he could say: this one thing I do well; because he labored earnestly and with all the energy of his will, he reached the highest perfection of his art. And so is it, and so will you find it, in every other art and science, and in all the employments and departments of life. "All the achievements of human undertaking at which we look with praise or wonder are instances of the resistless force of perseverance. It is by this that the quarry becomes a pyramid, and that distant countries are united by canals. It gives power to weakness, opens the world's wealth to poverty, spreads fertility over the barren landscape, and bids the choicest fruits and flowers spring up and flourish in the desert abodes of thorns and briars. If a man were to compare the single stroke of a pickax, or one impression of the spade, with the general design and last result, he would be overwhelmed by the sense of their disproportion; yet those petty operations, incessantly continued, in time surmount the greatest difficulties; and mountains are leveled and oceans bounded by the slender force of human beings." —*Samuel Johnson*. "The block of granite which was an obstacle in the pathway of the weak, be-

comes a stepping stone in the pathway of the strong."—*Carlyle*.

"Rome was not built in a day,
And water, constantly dropping,
Wears the hardest stones away."

Few things, in fact, are impossible in themselves, and it is for want of application, rather than of means, that men fail of success. Now if this be true of all things else, especially and essentially is it so of the great and all-important affair of our salvation. For in this, as in the minor affairs of life, success is that rich and lustrous crown which none may hope to win without first securing its two most resplendent and costly gems, industry and perseverance.

"Not everyone," declares our Blessed Savior, "that sayeth Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. vii:21. And again: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away."—Matt. xi:12. The race is not always to the fleet, nor the battle to the strong; but he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved. "Qui per-

severaverit usque ad mortem, hic salvus erit." "Know you not that they that run in the race all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain."—St. Paul 1 Cor. ix.

St. Jerome says that many begin well, but that few persevere. Alas! yes. Casting a glance along the shore of time, how many a wreck do we not behold? How many, starting out on the ocean of life with every prospect of a happy and prosperous voyage before them, have perished, and perished miserably, almost within sight of the harbor of safety, peace and rest. And here I recall an incident that I may be permitted to mention to you in passing. The first time this little sentence that I have just made use of ("passing along the shore of time," etc.,) struck me with remarkable force was during the second year of my college course. I jotted it down at the time, as it fell from the lips of a distinguished ecclesiastic; and I remember that the companion who sat alongside of me did the same. We are both priests now—he a professor in a famed educational institution that looms over the green hills of Maryland, and I the pastor of this little parish on the plains of Illinois. But he from whose lips they fell has long ago sadly exem-

plified in his own life, as, alas! it is possible that any of us may, the truth of his own words, and has this many a year been stranded among the wrecks that strew the shore of time—Saul, the first King of Israel; Judas, one of the chosen twelve; Tertullian, a learned apologist of the early Church; Martin Luther, the apostate monk, and hosts of others of ancient and modern days; men highly favored of God and blessed with no mean natural gifts, men that might to-day be burning and shining lights of virtue to cheer us on our way, and saints to plead our cause with God in heaven, had they only been faithful to the end. They began well, and continued for a time, but ended badly, because they failed to persevere in God's holy love and service. "The Lord," says St. Jerome, "requires not only the beginning of a good life, but also the end; it is the end that shall be rewarded." "Finis coronet opus." "The end crowns the work." No, my friends, neither youth, nor health, nor long years of tested virtue can afford any grounded assurance of final perseverance, or of a return to virtue (if, unhappily, it be lost), to those who place their reliance on such feeble supports. You may lead a life of more than angelic purity from the

cradle till your locks are silver, and fill up that life with a long list of hard and bitter penances, and then in an evil hour, rashly presuming on the strength of your accumulated merits, hearken to the voice of the tempter and fall, and death leap out of its ambush upon you while you are fallen, and, lo! you are the hopeless, hapless victim of eternal ruin.

Saints on the bed of death have been tempted to despair. Martyrs about to grasp the crown of life have lost confidence and fell away. Hence, St. Lawrence Justinian calls perseverance "the gate of heaven." If now you are the friend of God, well is it for you; but remember you are not yet saved. And when shall you be saved? When you shall have persevered to the end.

Have you begun a good life? Then thank God for it, but bear in mind the warning of St. Bernard: "The reward is promised to him who begins, but is given only to him who perseveres." It is not enough, then, to run for the prize, you must run till you win it. "So run," says St. Paul, "that you may obtain."—1 Cor. ix:24.

This is one of the uncertainties, one of the greatest trials, of our present state, that we never know whether we shall be eternally saved or eter-

nally lost. "Man knoweth not," say the Scriptures, "whether he be worthy of love or hatred." And, for a soul that truly loves its God, the fact that it may any moment lose His grace and be forever separated from Him is cause for continual fear and dread. Hence the great apostle of the Gentiles could in all truth exclaim—"Cupio dissolvi et esse cum Christo"—"I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ."—Phil. i:23. "Who will deliver me from the body of this death; for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."—Phil. i:21. But, not till his life work was ended, not till the dawn of that thrice happy day when death closed over his mortal career, could the same St. Paul say in all confidence and truth: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me in that day; and not only to me, but to them also that love His coming." II. Tim. iv:7-8.

"When a certain anxious person," says the author of the *Imitation of Christ*, "who oftentimes wavered between hope and fear, once overcome with sadness threw himself upon the ground in prayer before one of the altars in the

church, and revolving these things in his mind, said, 'Oh, if I only knew that I should persevere,' that very instant he heard within him this heavenly answer: 'And if thou didst know this what wouldst thou do?' Do now what thou wouldst then do and thou shalt be perfectly secure."—B. I, c. xxv:2.

There are three great enemies opposed to our final perseverance; and not till we shall have passed beyond the bounds of earth will they leave us in peace or give us rest. These enemies are the world, the flesh and the devil. The world (by which of course we mean wicked men, their maxims, vanities, and pomps) is the sworn enemy of Christ, and of all those who would model their lives on His precepts and example. "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."—1 St. John ii:15-16. There is no alternative; for the maxims of the world are diametrically opposed to the maxims of Jesus Christ. What the world esteems, Jesus Christ has called folly. "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." 1 Cor. iii:19. Christ says: "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures here, where the moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal." But the world says: Blessed are the rich, for they are looked up to and respected; get all the money you can, no matter how you get it; lay up for yourselves silver and gold, and large tracts of land. But again, "Blessed," says the Scripture, "is the man who hath not put his trust in money, nor in treasures;"* and, "be not afraid when a man shall be made rich, and when the glory of his house shall be increased, for when he shall die he shall take nothing away, neither shall his glory descend with him."—Ps. xlviii:17.

This truth of Holy Writ is often brought home to us when those whom we knew, personally or by reputation, as having lived for money are summoned to their final reckoning. How frightfully humiliating it must be to a man, say of threescore years and ten, who has spent his life in trying to amass a fortune, or to acquire hundreds of acres, to reflect at this period of his life that perhaps only a day, or an hour, stands between him and utter poverty; and that he may be suddenly summoned to another sphere, to be-

* Eccles. xxxi:8.

gin life without a single one of the advantages that made him so powerful and so comfortable in this world below. This is a very commonplace train of thought, but, surely, it is well worth our attention. If men thought more seriously and sensibly on this line there would be less greed in the world, and less antagonism between the rich and the poor. But the world will be no greater enemy to such than it is or will be to you and to me if we foolishly allow ourselves to be captivated by its tinsel riches, or carried away by its follies and dissipation.

"I am not at all uneasy," says Cicero, "that I came into, and have so far passed, my course in this world; because I have so lived in it that I have reason to believe that I have been of some use to it; and, when the close comes, I shall quit life as I would an inn, and not as a real home." "I hold this world," writes Shakespeare, "but as a stage, where every man must play his part, and mine a sad one."

Our own flesh with its vices and concupiscences is an enemy of which death alone will rid us, and against which we can defend ourselves only by being always watchful, unceasing in prayer, and careful always to avoid the occasions

of sin, by which, of course, we understand all persons, places and things that may easily lead us into sin. Neglect of avoiding the occasion of sin was the cause of the fall of our first parents, and has since led many and many to perdition. God had forbidden them even to touch the forbidden fruit. "God commanded us," said Eve, "that we should not eat, and that we should not touch it." —Gen. iii:3.

But, through want of caution, she first began to look at the apple; she afterwards took it in her hand, and finally ate it.

The eyes are the windows of the soul; and what they do not see the heart does not crave for.

"Averte, Domine, oculos meos, ne videant vanitatem." "Turn away my eyes, O Lord, that they may not see vanity," was the prayer of the royal psalmist, and might, with much profit, be ours also.

Finally, that deceitful and crafty spirit, who of old met with such grand success in his first attack, and who ever since "goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,"* is the avowed and bitter enemy of every child that

* 1 Peter v:8.

lives. No resistance baffles him, and no defeat disarms him; but, emboldened by each successive victory, and inflamed with ever-increasing demoniac rage and hatred by every repulse, confiding in his extensive and successful experience of nearly six thousand years, he studies attentively and carefully each individual character; discovers wherein each one's weakness lies; redoubles his onslaughts as life goes on, and reserves his strongest forces for a final conquest at death's dark hour.

These are the enemies that stand in our way on the heavenward road; these are the foes that are leagued against us in our contest for the crown of life. "For our wrestling," as the apostle tells us, "is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers; against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in high places. Therefore take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day and stand in all things perfect."—Eph. vi:12-13. If, therefore, as the Epistle of to-day* tells us, we would "so run that we may obtain," if we would persevere to the end

* Septuagesima Sunday.

and attain the crown of life, we must adopt the means necessary to obtain salvation.

Always confidently hope and trust in the infinite merits of the blessed passion and death of His only begotten Son, and ever humbly distrust ourselves. For, if stars have fallen from heaven, if those whose works seemed praiseworthy have fallen to the very lowest, nay, if those who have fed on the bread of angels have been delighted with the husks of swine, how can dust and ashes, as we are, dare to presume? Let us, then, following the advice of the devout Thomas à Kempis, "never promise ourselves security in this life, however good religious or devout solitaires we may seem to be;" for, as the same pious author truthfully remarks, "there is no order so holy, nor place so retired, where there are no temptations;" and the experience of St. Jerome, joined to that of many others, teaches us that in the caves of Palestine we may bring back to our view the theatres of Rome; and that where the eye can trace nothing but the footprints of wild beasts the imagination can bring dangerous and seductive objects before it. If we would strive for the mastery we must refrain ourselves from all things; if we would receive an incorruptible

crown we must run, not as an uncertainty; we must fight, not as one beating the air, but we must chastise our bodies and bring them into subjection to the spirit.

We should not, however, be disheartened in our spiritual warfare whatever trials surround us, whatever difficulties lie ahead of us, whatever recollections of the past sadden us. Remember that earnest endeavor will bring success, but that discouragement is sure defeat. In the accesses of temptation, in the successive failure of our plans, in the disappointment of our affections, in every crisis and revolution of our lives, let us ever hearken to the voice of our Maker, and never turn a deaf ear to the inspirations of His grace.

Then, though the shades of night may lower over us, though rocks may surround us, still, with prayer as our defense, with the Sacraments as our shelter, Mary, our ever Blessed Mother, and all the angels and saints of God as our protectors, we will, in their blessed light, be able to steer on our course in safety; and under their heavenly guidance we shall finally obtain "the prize" for which the apostle so earnestly exhorts us to run.

Heaven.

"How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord."

"Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God."—Ps. LXXXIII and LXXXVI.

"We see now through a glass in an obscure manner: but then face to face."—I Cor. XIII: 12.

St. Mary of Egypt, who dwelt nearly fifty years in the desert, being asked at the end of her life by the Abbot Zosimus how she had been able to live for so many years in such a wilderness, replied: "With the hope of heaven."

"There is but one way to heaven for the learned and the unlearned."—Jeremy Taylor.

"He who seldom thinks of heaven is not likely to get thither; as the only way to hit the mark is to keep the eye fixed upon it."—Bishop Horne.

XII.

“And after this I saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and peoples, and tribes, and tongues, standing before the throne, and in the sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands:

And they cried with a loud voice, saying: Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the ancients, and about the four living creatures; and they fell before the throne upon their faces, and adored God, saying: Amen, benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honor, and power, and strength to our God, forever and ever, Amen.”—Apoc. vii:9-13.

“The Church Militant of Christ is ever fair and beautiful. She is beautiful in the divine grace which adorns and illuminates her soul. She is beautiful in her heroic acts of charity, in her undying hope, and in her unchanging and unchangeable faith. The glory of her risen Spouse

shines round about her. Though she stands on Calvary, she is encompassed by the splendors that flow from the light of Thabor.

"How tender and touching are her devotions! What sweet thoughts are inspired by her crosses, her beads, and her paintings! How beautiful are her wayside chapels, her hidden oratories, her gray and silent convents, her ivied monasteries, and her awe-inspiring mediaeval cathedrals!

"She is beautiful, too, in her children—in her virgins and her martyrs, in her monks and her hermits, her priests and her pontiffs."* But in nothing (let me add to the words of the author of this quotation), it must be assuredly confessed, is she so surpassingly beautiful and grand, in nothing so strikingly orderly and lovely, as in the feasts of precept and devotion that mark the course of her liturgical year.

To-day, while bleak November winds send their chilling blasts over the earth, already thickly carpeted with the sear and yellow leaves of autumn; while naked boughs and faded flowers evidence the departure of all that is most charming in the material world about us, and grimly

* *Catholic Flowers from Protestant Gardens.*—James J. Treacy.

betoken the onward and steady march of the pensive gloom of winter, she would transport us, in imagination, beyond the evanescent scenes of earth to the fairer and brighter prospects of that undiscovered country where change and decay shall never enter, in order that, by reflecting on the pleasing and indescribable possibilities that await us in our future state of existence we may be encouraged so to shape our lives here below that we may be worthy to be admitted within the glorious ranks of the Church triumphant in heaven. But while we acknowledge that it is meet and just so to do, and reverently bow in meek and humble submission to the pious desires of Mother Church, we must candidly confess that even the most complete and glowing description that could possibly be given of the theme before us must fall infinitely short of the great and magnificent reality; for even the renowned apostle of the Gentiles, to whom was vouchsafed a vision of the heaven of heavens, at a loss to express the grandeur and sublimity of the wonders that he there beheld, could only exclaim, in sentiments of enraptured admiration: "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it as yet entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath pre-

pared for those who love Him and keep His commandments."—1 Cor. ii:9.

But, as stars of lesser magnitude reflect the golden splendor of orbs of greater brilliancy, as light and shadow, when viewed in pleasing contrast, display the hidden beauties of painted or chiseled art, and bring them out more fully, so may we, by a brief consideration of all that can charm the eye, delight the ear or regale the mind in the material world about us rise to a clearer perception, though dim withal, of those transcendent joys that to-day inundate the souls of the just made perfect.

Notwithstanding the callousness of some minds, before whom all the glories of the combined spheres pass in daily succession without touching their hearts, elevating their fancies, or leaving any durable remembrance, yet, decidedly wonderful and grand are the innumerable beauties that the nether world unfolds to the eye of the man of refined and delicate sensibility. For, whether with the gentle and affectionate Cowper we view these beauties in the "mellow lustre of the rising or setting sun, the sparkling concave of the midnight sky, the mountain forest tossing and roaring to the storm or warbling with all the

melodies of a calm summer evening; the sweet interchange of hill and dale, sunshine and shade, grove, lawn and water which an extensive landscape offers to the view; or last, though not by far the least, the scenery of old ocean, so lovely, so majestic, so tremendous,"—beautiful they are, we repeat, and entrancingly grand, to all who view them aright. And, must we not all feel a perplexity, chastened by a sense of beauty, when we think of the myriads of fair and gorgeous objects that exist and perish without any eye to witness their glories; the flowers that are born to blush unseen in the wilderness; the gems, so marvelously fashioned, that stud the dark, untrodden caverns; the living things, with adornments of yet richer workmanship, that, solitary and unknown, glitter and die? Now these forms—these appearances of pervading beauty, which steal over our meditations like strains and snatches of a sweet and distant symphony, and touch all thoughtful minds with a sense of hidden delight, a still and grateful admiration, must they not excite within us no unworthy thoughts? Must they not impress us, even, with an indestructible conviction, far beyond all that we can possibly know or conceive, of the beauty, order and sym-

metry of those objects that await the sense of sight in the world beyond the grave, when these and even more ecstatic scenes will be viewed from the battlements of that new Jerusalem, where, as the Sacred Text informs us, the streets are of purest gold, the walls of jasper and the gates of dazzling pearl; where the Lord God Almighty is the temple and His glory the lamp that enlightens it? When in addition to the mere spectacle and love of all this, yea, when infinitely above, and immeasurably beyond, all else that can be possibly imagined or described, we add the secure, undisturbed and lasting possession of that "Beauty ever ancient and ever new," the possession and enjoyment of Whom will ravish the souls of the blest with renewed and ever-increasing delights during the continued rounds of the eternal years, must we not, I say, in view of all this, justly conclude, with the inspired writer, and bear him out in the propriety of his wondrous declaration, that "eye," in very truth, "hath not seen what God hath prepared for those who love Him and keep His commandments?"

But, "earth's prospects," to quote again our poet author, "be they never so charming, would

soon weary the sight of desultory man were there not something further to soothe and satisfy the human ear—mighty winds that sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood of ancient growth; the fast fluttering leaves of unnumbered branches waving in the breeze or sighing to the gale; the less composure that waits upon the roar of distant floods; the still softer voice of the neighboring fountain, or of tiny rills, that slip through the clefted rock, and losing themselves in the lordly flow of some gentle river at length betray the secret of their silent course in the dash of deep and dark blue ocean on his winding shore."—*The Task*. All these, inanimate though their sounds may be, exhilarate the spirit and restore the tone of languid nature; and though they may, and do, when they come to us in our better moments, excite within us inexpressible sentiments of delight and pleasure, still their unpretentious charms must forever remain incomplete till graced by the silver-toned accompaniments of melody and song. "There is music in all things, if man had ears," said Byron. "In the germ, when the first trace of life begins to stir, it is the nurse of the soul; it murmurs in the ear, and the child sleeps; the tones are the compan-

ions of his dreams,—they are the world in which he lives."—*Bettina*.

And as life grows older the meaning of song grows deeper. "It moves us and we know not why; we feel the tears, but cannot trace their source. We love it for the buried hopes, the garnered memories and the tender feelings it can summon at a touch."—*Miss L. E. Landon*.

It delights the ear, recreates the mind, soothes the soul, and, as we descend in the vale of years, it is all of heaven we have below, leading us to the edge of the infinite.

Speak as much as we will, and as beautifully as we will, yet, no better exponent of the power of music to charm remains than the recollection of those happy, instantaneous emotions which we have all experienced, and which invariably arise within us, when strains expressive of joy, tranquility, or the softer passions break upon the ear; or, of the deeper gloom, in which sounds compatible with our darker moods never fail to tincture the thoughts and overshadow the imagination when heard in the dreary hours of solitude and silence. And oh, if "music's force has charms to soothe a savage breast, to soften rocks, or bend the knotted oak" (Congreve); if, as legends

tell us, magic numbers and persuasive sound have informed with living souls the adamantine powers of nature; yea, if the single golden touch of a seraphic hand on chords unknown to mortal minstrelsy could throw a saint of God into an ecstasy of extreme delight, what shall we say of the celestial harmonies of those thousands of thousands that minister before the Ancient of Days—those thousand times a hundred thousand angelic voices, swelled by the undying chorus of that great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and peoples, and tribes, and tongues, whose unending anthems of praise and benediction continually resound through the starlit vaults of heaven, and float around the spangled throne of its Immaculate Queen, till they are lost in the bosom of the Most High. Furthermore, to all that is calculated to afford pleasure to poor mortal man in his present state of existence add the loftiest and most inimitable productions of poetic and artistic genius, whatever is best fitted to rouse or soothe the imagination, draw forth the affections, or employ the understanding; multiply, adorn, embellish them as you will, concentrate them all in one simultaneous round of uninterrupted enjoyment, and

you have, in the end, only an imperfect picture, a very, very faint conception of the indescribable, the inconceivable, joys of heaven. But even this is not all. We know that besides the tranquil possession of every possible, positive good, there will likewise be the absence of everything that could, even in the remotest degree, occasion pain or sorrow to the soul. In heaven there will be no misgiving, no animosity, no envy, and no jealousy. There there will be no one to chide or thwart us, no one to slight, oppose or contradict us. There there will be none of those inexplicable idiosyncrasies, none of those strange and varied forms of taste and feeling, which in this cold world below so frequently estrange hearts, engender cruel misunderstandings, and, often, alas! sever the sacred bonds of pure and holy friendship. There, in fine, there will be no sickness, no disease, and no death. No, that dark-plumed warrior of unnumbered conquests, the trophies of whose long and undisputed reign loom over the hilltops of every village and city throughout the length and breadth of the land, shall never pass the pearly portals of heaven. And will not the possession and enjoyment of all this be wonderfully enhanced by the agreeable companion-

ship of those who are to share it with us? There we shall meet the patriarchs and prophets of the olden time, the apostles and martyrs of the early Church, the holy and the just, the noble and the good, the innocent and penitent saints of every age, and clime, and nation. And oh, bliss incomprehensible! there we shall at length behold, and be forever united with, her who was the humblest of the humble, the purest of the pure, the stainless mother of Jesus. And though in holy sacrifice and fervent prayer we are ever mindful of our departed dead, whom unrequited Justice may yet detain on the borderland of twilight and of longing, still we fondly cherish the hope that there are, on this the joyous festival of All the Saints, amid the glorious assembly of the blest many who were near and dear to us all. Some among us will, perchance, recall the hallowed memory of that guileless friend of our gay and careless childhood, who drifted from us so early in the days of his purity and innocence, while we were left to journey on. More will revert to some period, perhaps in the not very long ago, when a darling brother or a virgin sister grew weary, and laid down the burden of life, before their young hearts were stained by the sin and

sorrow of a wicked world, or were soured by its trials and disappointments. Others of us, in fine, will remember the furrowed brow or the silvered locks of a sainted parent, whose kindly words of encouragement and sympathy we still treasure in our heart of hearts, while whatever was fair and excellent in their lives comes forth from the gloom in ideal beauty, and leads us on through the wilds and mazes of our own mortal way.

All these, whether imagination picture them to us as bowing down in adoration at the feet of the Omnipotent, or treading the flowery meads of heaven clothed in robes of ethereal whiteness, will, we feel confident, lift up their pure hands in intercession for us to-day, before the throne of grace and mercy.

And should it be our own fortunate lot eventually to attain the object of our being's end and aim, I fancy that, looking back on the devious passes of the few and evil days of life's checkered career, we shall lovingly comprehend how the Omnipotent hand, as well as the all-searching eye of an all-ruling Providence reached from end to end through the whole extent of times and places, in His admirable wisdom most powerfully, but sweetly, disposing of all, ever making His

creatures submissive to His inscrutable designs, even while they seemed to take their ordinary course.

And casting an inward glance upon ourselves, no longer encompassed with the trappings of frail mortality, but viewing our glorified nature in the spotless mirror of our Maker's boundless and ever-adorable perfections, we shall better and more perfectly realize how, in the disappointment of our affections, in the failure of our plans, and the successive fallacies of our hopes, God's ways were not our ways; and how what we oftentimes unwisely deemed an irreparable loss proved a priceless and incomparable gain.

Then too, at least, it shall be given the priest of God to know why he was singled out to be the dispenser of those high and holy mysteries that the winged seraphs that share his destiny would enviously discharge. And as the placid tide of unblighted happiness and unruffled gladness courses on, the mild, forbearing matron, the virtuous youth, and modest maiden, all safely housed at last within the sacred precincts of their eternal home, and beholding him as the dear instrument that opened to them the safe and narrow path that led them to their Savior's side, will

bless him a thousand and a thousand times, and their unalloyed joy, which now no man can take from them, and that abundance of sweet peace which passeth all understanding, will be another lustrous jewel to brighten the aureola of his own glory for evermore.

Though great beyond the power of words to say, as is, and must be, the bliss of the blessed in heaven, still were it possible for them to apprehend, for one single instant, the loss of the joy which they possess, such an apprehension would render them more miserable than all the bliss which they experience could render them happy.

We know, however, that such a fear can never, never come near their borders. Bathed as they are in the unfading brightness of God's unfailing presence, and basking forever in the clear, unclouded light of His infinite love, all possible cravings are at once and forever perfectly satiated; they rest in Him as their ultimate end, secure in the assurance of never again being separated from Him. But what comparison shall I employ adequate enough to convey to you even a faint idea of this last crowning feature of heaven's bliss? Shall I bid you behold the fathomless ocean, and measure the briny drops that compose its im-

ment, or number the wrinkled sands that pave its extended shores? Easier far would the computation be than that of the revolution of the eternal years. Shall I call to my assistance the science of numbers, and bid the mathematician have recourse to his highest powers of calculation? Even so, let him be exclusively employed in the operation, and when he shall have completed a cycle of digits sufficient to gird the countless worlds that illumine the cerulean fields of space, he will find that he has only bartered away irrevocable time in a useless and hopeless task. Yes, when years will have swelled into years, when ages will have rolled into myriads and myriads of ages, when the mind of the most brilliant genius will have exhausted itself in endeavoring to measure the length of eternity by its own ideas of time, yea, when time itself shall have ceased, and worlds will have passed away, the uninterrupted joys of heaven will only just be beginning, to continue through the ages that are to last forever, and forever, and forever.

Heaven, the finale of the "Old Themes," the one most prolific and beautiful in thought, is surely well worth all the studious contemplation and active preparation this life of ours can

give it. "Heaven lies about us in our infancy," and the fondest dream of youth, and the chastened wish of age, which neither honors nor cares can ever extinguish, is the hope of one day resting from the pursuits that now absorb us.

In parting, then, with a theme upon which I fain would linger, let me draw upon a line of thought very significantly expressed in the concluding paragraph of the preface to the first edition of that unctuous little book "The Happiness of Heaven," by Rev. F. J. Boudreaux, S. J., and in one of the final chapters, if memory serves me well, of Rev. Michael Mueller's admirable work "The Prodigal Son."

Should the perusal of these pages cause some worshipper of mammon to pause in his downward career to think of "treasures which neither the moth nor the rust consume," should they incite those

"Who yield up to pleasure their nights and their days,
Forgetful of service, forgetful of praise,"

—*Gerald Griffin.*

to sigh after joys that pass not away; should they inspire the poor, the down-trodden and the afflicted to cast one longing, lingering glance toward the land "where sorrows are unknown,"

and all tears are wiped away; should they induce the lonely pastor in his isolated country mission, the spouse of Christ in her quiet cloister home, God's servants all this wide world over to labor the more earnestly to behold, in higher degrees of glory ethereal, the face of the Father Eternal, then, indeed, shall I have written to good purpose. Be all this, however, as it may, with what sentiments soever the thoughtful reader may feel himself inspired, or to what generous resolves he may be drawn, by the perusal of these "Old Thoughts" on this sublimest of the "Old Themes," for myself I have only to add that I have ever been resolved, and that I am yet firmly determined, to labor faithfully and well for the attainment of this only end for which we were created, the only purpose for which we exist, cost what it may. Though my eyes were to close forever to all that is bright and beautiful in nature's scenery; though I were to be shut out forever from the beaming smiles of those that are near and dear to me; still I will not complain; but, I must one day behold my Creator in the unspeakable rewards of the Beatific Vision; I must one day see Mary, the Immaculate Mother of God, in all her beauty and loveliness; I must gaze on the exquisite, the ecstatic joys of heaven.

Though my ears were to be hushed forever to all the sounds that are best fitted to please and delight them; though no words of sweet comfort, of fond affection, or of immortal hope were ever to greet me more, oh, no, I will not repine; but, they must one day drink in the joyful refrains of eternity's rosy morn; they must one day reopen to the ravishing melodies of heaven.

In fine, should racking pain or foul disease distract my mind and lay my body low; should friends prove false, or fortune frown, or the fickle shaft of fate exile me to some far off, sea-girt isle, to end my days in misery and distress, yes, with God's assisting grace, I would bear it all without a murmur; but, I must one day set foot on that serene and fragrant shore "Where tempests never beat, nor billows roar." I must one day arrive at my true home in heaven where, indissolubly associated with father, mother, brother and sister, and in union with that "great multitude of all nations, and peoples, and tribes, and tongues," I ardently hope, all unworthy though I be, to be permitted to hymn my Maker's praise in that never-ending chant of the blessed:

"Benediction, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honor, and power, and strength, to our God forever and forever."

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